

# Washington Early Learning State and Local Coordination Project

## FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS Of Project Steering Committee

[month] 2013

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## Foreword

[Message from WELP members]

## Acknowledgments

This *Final Report and Recommendations* of the Washington Early Learning State and Local Coordination Project represents the results of a 16-month process of listening, learning, discussing, trying out ideas, getting feedback, and developing plans. Much appreciation goes to all who participated in this project. The groups who gave generously of their time, talent and good thinking include the following:

### Project Steering Committee:

Angela Abrams  
 Bianca Bailey  
 Jody Becker-Green  
 Kelli Bohanon  
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### Early Learning Advisory Council:

Nina Auerbach (Thrive by Five Washington)  
 Bianca Bailey (parent)  
 Jody Becker-Green (Dept. of Social and Health Services)

Don Bennett (Higher Education Coordinating Board)  
 Marty Brown (State Board for Community & Technical Colleges)  
 Bob Butts (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction)  
 Leslie Dozono (Children's Alliance)  
 Rep. Roger Goodman (Washington State House of Representatives)  
 Rep. Larry Haler (Washington State House of Representatives)  
 Sen. Nick Harper (Washington State Senate)  
 Maxine Hayes, MD (Dept. of Health)  
 Dee Hirsch (Discovery Montessori School)  
 Dr. Bette Hyde (Dept. of Early Learning)  
 Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer (Dept. of Early Learning)  
 Taфра Jones (Advisory Group member, Dept. of Early Learning)  
 Cynthia Juarez (Educational Service District 105)  
 Sen. Curtis King (Washington State Senate)  
 Lois Martin (Community Day Center for Children, Inc.)  
 Sandy Nelson (Educational Service District 113)  
 Mary Perkins (early childhood consultant)

Jeromy Sullivan (Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe)  
 Sue Winn (family child care provider)

**150 stakeholders** who participated in interviews

**173 people** who offered comments in Round 1 public engagement

**223 people** who offered comments in Round 2 public engagement

### Staff Team:

*Department of Early Learning:* Kelli Bohanon, Deanna Stewart, Nancy Vernon  
*Thrive by Five Washington:* Molly Boyajian, Lauren Hipp  
*Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:* Bob Butts

### Consultant Team:

*Cedar River Group:* John Howell, Rhonda Peterson  
*Dovetailing:* Bea Kelleigh, Garrison Kurtz  
*National Equity Project:* Victor Cary and Stephen Chang  
*Trang Tu Consulting:* Trang Tu



## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Purpose

Washington has set a powerful vision for an early learning system that spans care, education, services and supports for families and children from prenatal care through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade:

In Washington, we work together so that all children start life with a solid foundation for success, based on strong families and a world-class early learning system for all children prenatal through third grade. Accessible, accountable, and developmentally and culturally appropriate, our system partners with families to ensure that every child is healthy, capable and confident in school and in life (Vision Statement, *Washington Early Learning Plan*).

Improved state and local coordination (Early Learning Plan Strategy #34) is a key to achieving this vision. Four decades of science show that children’s earliest experiences influence their lifelong learning and development. Many individuals, organizations, government agencies and professions help to care for, nurture and educate young children.

What is needed now is to increase the connections across state and regional levels and across disciplines, create more and better ways to share information, and ensure that the early learning system is meeting the needs of children and families. The goal is to build an early learning system that can offer children what they need when they need it, based on child and family requirements, and available resources.

### Cosponsors and Steering Committee

To address this need, the Washington Early Learning Partnership formed the State and Local Coordination Project. The partnership’s members—the Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the public-private partnership Thrive by Five Washington (Thrive)—cosponsored the project. A project Steering Committee was created to guide the project, and which served as a subcommittee of the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC). The Steering Committee’s 29 members represented different areas of the state and the range of agencies, organizations and professions involved with early learning.

### Methodology

**Community research.** The project undertook community and national research to better understand and find ways to improve the early learning system in Washington. This research consisted of the following elements.

- **Current system.** The project developed a diagram that reflects how coordination of the early learning system currently works in Washington.
- **National best practices.** The project reviewed how other states coordinate early learning, focusing on three states considered to have best practice models: North Carolina, Arizona and Oklahoma. All three have a state-level organization (in different forms—one is a public agency,

one a nonprofit and one a public-private partnership), with boards appointed by the Governor and/or Legislature, plus local or regional groups (nonprofits or coalitions).

- **Early learning system functions.** The project reviewed early learning system functions and decided to use the six essential functions of an effective early learning system identified by the national BUILD Initiative in a 2011 review of collaborative leadership and accountability structures.<sup>1</sup> These functions are: (1) set standards, goals and outcomes; (2) set priorities and choose strategies; (3) ensure funding and policy support; (4) implement and expand services and programs; (5) build public understanding and public will; and (6) be accountable for achieving outcomes.
- **Stakeholder interviews.** The project interviewed 150 stakeholders in Washington about the challenges for early learning coordination, and their aspirations and ideas for strengthening the coordination of early learning programs and services in our state. The individuals interviewed represented a balance of people who work at the state level and local levels, in a variety of early learning fields.

**Key barriers and opportunities.** From this community research, the project developed a needs assessment with summary lists of the key barriers to and opportunities for improving coordination. The project defined “barriers” as what makes it hard to find and use early learning services and programs, and “opportunities” as what can help to improve state and local coordination of services and programs.

| Key Barriers to Coordination of Early Learning Services   |   |
|---|---|
| Capacity Barriers   | Coordination Barriers   |
| 1. It is hard for families to access the services they need.  | 1. It is hard for families to find information and to “navigate” the system.  |
| 2. There are not enough providers for some types of services.   | 2. The transition from early learning to elementary school is tough for families.   |
| 3. There are not enough people who meet professional standards in some parts of the state and in some communities of color.                                 | 3. Some communities, such as rural areas and refugee and immigrant communities, are isolated and have unique challenges.                                  |
| 4. Too few early learning and K-12 teachers have the preparation and tools to support children’s learning in developmentally and culturally competent ways. | 4. Too few state and local leaders and providers know about programs, issues and plans outside their program “silos.”                                     |
|   | 5. There is not enough two-way communication and planning between the state and local communities.  |
|   | 6. There are no common measures of program, system and child outcomes that both the state and local communities use to show value and focus improvements. |
|   | 7. Agencies use different geographic boundaries for their initiatives.  |

<sup>1</sup> Karen Ponder, “Building Early Childhood Systems: The Collaborative Leadership and Accountability Model,” BUILD Initiative, August 2011. Web address: [http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/elac-qris/docs/WA\\_Collaborative\\_Leadership\\_brief.pdf](http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/elac-qris/docs/WA_Collaborative_Leadership_brief.pdf)

| Key Opportunities To Improve Coordination of Early Learning Services |   |
|--|---|
| 1.   | Create an easy way for all families to learn about and access early learning, family support and health services.   |
| 2.   | Engage and empower the families and communities whose children are experiencing the greatest disparities to help plan services, and to monitor progress and results.                  |
| 3.   | Promote early learning partnerships that can coordinate local early learning efforts in every part of the state.  |
| 4.   | Create intentional, formal connections and two-way communication between state and regional coordinating bodies.  |
| 5.   | Strengthen state-level coordination of early learning, family support, health, and child welfare services across agencies and organizations.  |
| 6.   | Create a consistent, single place for community and school leaders to learn about planned and new state initiatives.  |
| 7.   | Select a handful of meaningful goals and indicators to monitor progress and results for young children and their families statewide and locally.                                      |
| 8.   | Create state and local continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes to understand what is and is not working well, and identify ways to improve services and systems.               |
| 9.   | Create a consistent framework and universal values to guide the development of new initiatives and system building efforts.   |
| 10.  | Provide more opportunities that set statewide funding goals and accountability measures and allow the flexibility for communities to tailor implementation plans to meet local needs. |
| 11.  | Promote public awareness of early learning's importance and strengthen public will to support children's success.   |

**Communication and public engagement.** The project partners shared information as the project progressed and engaged the public in shaping the recommendations. Communication included a project webpage on DEL's website and emailed updates. The project offered two opportunities for review and comment:

- **Engagement on barriers and opportunities.** The project posted on DEL's website the lists of key barriers and opportunities, along with a survey for comments. The 175 responses came from people across the state who held a variety of early learning roles. More than 85 percent rated the lists as describing the barriers and opportunities "well" or "very well." Major themes in written comments included: the need to address many challenges to accessing services; the importance of raising public awareness of early learning's importance; and the importance of addressing the needs of the state's diverse populations. Comments also urged building on what is working; seeking partnerships; and allowing local flexibility to implement programs.
- **Engagement on preliminary recommendations.** The second public comment opportunity focused on the Steering Committee's preliminary recommendations. A total of 223 people responded to the comment survey. A strong majority said the proposed changes would be effective in improving state-local coordination of early learning. They gave the highest ratings to recommendations: (1) for ELAC to adopt an annual work plan; (2) to increase stakeholder engagement, and (3) to gain agreement on a handful of statewide performance goals.

## Cultural Competence Review

To ensure that the coordination structure and methods recognized the diversity of communities in the state, the project sponsors asked the National Equity Project to conduct formal cultural competence reviews of the project. They provided this review at two points in the project. The first review was early in the project, and focused on the methodology and approach to engagement and communication. The second took place after the Steering Committee developed preliminary recommendations.

Recommendations from the first review recommended: scheduling cultural competence review meetings at key steps in the project; and using more inclusive language. The Steering Committee and project team took action to follow these recommendations. Recommendations from the second review included: aligning with the work underway by Thrive by Five and early learning stakeholders to create an Racial Equity Theory of Change (RETOC) for early learning; and including examples of racial disparities, using examples from the stakeholder interviews and public engagement, to keep a focus on racial equity in the recommendations. The Steering Committee and project team incorporated these suggestions into the project's final recommendations.

## Final Recommendations

Based on the public review comments, the State and Local Coordination Steering Committee developed the project's final recommendations.

### OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1.** Adopt a stakeholder engagement framework for major policy and programmatic issues.

- Engage stakeholders at major decision points to provide decision makers with insight and information, promote collective understanding, and build momentum for specific goals or strategies.
- Use a two-part framework consisting of: (1) three stakeholder-engagement processes with different levels of intensity and reach; and (2) a set of six questions to help agencies determine which process to use.

**Recommendation 2.** Adopt a handful of performance goals and indicators to help state and regional partners work together, and focus on the same strategic objectives and desired outcomes.

- Agree on a handful of measurable performance goals focused on: the quality, cultural competence and effectiveness of services; advancing important system improvements; or directly boosting results for children.
- Use performance goals to: monitor progress toward the goals; understand issues of equity of access, program quality, and outcomes for children; build statewide and regional capacity; and conduct continuous quality improvement.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COORDINATION AT EACH SYSTEM LEVEL

#### State-Level Coordination: Washington Early Learning Partnership

**Recommendation 3.** Invite the Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to participate in the Washington Early Learning Partnership with DEL, OSPI and Thrive.

**Recommendation 4.** Continue to create annual priority strategies, and develop a process for consultation with ELAC and Regional Coalitions.

**Recommendation 5.** Continue to enhance the communication among Washington Early Learning Partnership members and regional early learning partners. Create a calendar of current and upcoming state-level initiatives and actions that will have a significant impact on local stakeholders.

#### **State-Regional Coordination: Early Learning Advisory Council**

**Recommendation 6.** Strengthen ELAC's advisory function in the early learning system by making it a forum for state and regional partners to: (a) share information about needs and plan improvements; (b) inform decisions in meaningful ways; and (c) promote joint actions that cross-sector partners can take to improve services and results for our state's rich diversity of children and families.

- Enhance ELAC's advisory relationship so that ELAC advises DEL, and on issues of common interest and, as agreed, other Washington Early Learning Partnership agencies.
- Strengthen ELAC's function as a forum for state and regional partners to share information about needs and inform decisions in meaningful ways, to plan ways to improve early learning, and to promote joint actions that cross-sector partners can take to improve services and results for children and families.

**Recommendation 7.** Clarify how ELAC will carry out these more focused functions by: (a) developing guiding documents that describe ELAC's structure, charter, ground rules, and members' roles and responsibilities; (b) developing an annual ELAC work plan; and (c) instituting these functions and processes.

- Create a clear charter, ground rules, member roles and responsibilities, and hold a periodic assessment of ELAC's effectiveness and of what went well and what could be improved.
- Create a committee structure, with charters for each committee (an Executive Committee with other committees based on work plan priorities).
- Hold six four- to six-hour regular meetings per year. Hold special meetings as needed.
- Enhance communication between meetings.
- Create an annual work plan.
- Provide an orientation for new members.

**Recommendation 8.** Expand ELAC membership to include representation of each Regional Coalition and deepen connections to statewide associations representing key early learning fields.

- Expand from 23 to 35 members by adding representatives from: each of the 10 Regional Coalitions, the Early Learning Action Alliance, Child Care Aware of Washington, and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems.
- Ensure that all ELAC members are affiliated with statewide networks and associations.

#### **Regional Coordination: Regional Coalitions Recommendations**

**Recommendation 9.** Continue to strengthen the effectiveness and durability of Regional Coalitions.

- Continue integration of the Infant Toddler Regions and Regional Coalitions.
- Create guiding documents and other mechanisms to ensure: clear decision-making and communications processes, broad agreement, and effective implementation.

**Recommendation 10.** Increase engagement of diverse regional stakeholders.

- Identify the types of engagement opportunities to use to engage different types of stakeholders.
- Assess current outreach efforts to different cultural, income-level and geographically remote communities.
- Cultivate advocates, funders and policymakers.
- Raise parent and public awareness about regional priorities, initiatives and services.

**Recommendation 11.** Strengthen joint regional and state action to achieve common goals.

- Create simple regional action plans to implement prioritized strategies and strengthen joint local, regional and state action to achieve common goals.
- Provide a voice for regional stakeholders, including families and parents, through participation in ELAC.

## Conclusion

The recommendations for state and local coordination in this report can result in important benefits for children and families. Ultimately:

- Families and those working at the local and regional level will have a consistent voice in shaping early learning policies and programs.
- People will join together in their region to understand their needs, learn from each other, and find ways to improve early learning opportunities for all children.
- People from all regions of the state and those at the state level will work together to close the opportunity gap for young children.
- All children will have what they need for healthy development and learning at every step from prenatal through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

## Implementation Plan

The Steering Committee has suggested a plan to implement the State and Local Coordination Project recommendations. Before this plan becomes final, the implementing entities will need to discuss and refine specific implementation details to ensure that the particular situations of each are met. Final implementation plans will be negotiated with members of the Washington Early Learning Partnership to ensure quick and effective action.

The Implementation Plan how the different levels of the early learning system (state, ELAC, regional ) connect, suggests the steps to take, and provides an idea of the resources needed for short-term action and long-term capacity. The plan provides an overall schedule, with actions to take in the near-term (one to two months), mid-term (three to six months) and long-term (seven months or longer). Following are the action steps suggested to implement each recommendation.

### Stakeholder engagement (Recommendation 1)

1. Develop protocol to implement the stakeholder engagement framework ( mid-term).
2. Use existing work planning processes to identify the type of stakeholder engagement to use with different projects (near-term).

3. Develop project plans for stakeholder engagement, based on work planning decisions (mid-term).
4. Conduct stakeholder engagement process (mid-term and ongoing).
5. Communicate decisions to stakeholders (ongoing).

#### **Performance goals (Recommendation 2)**

1. Develop draft goals and indicators (mid-term).
2. Gather comments and input from affected stakeholders (mid-term).
3. Prepare final recommendations (long-term).
4. Decide on and communicate the Statewide Performance Goals and Indicators (long-term).
5. Utilize a simple CQI process to review progress toward meeting performance goals (ongoing, with reports twice a year).

#### **Washington Early Learning Partnership (Recommendations 3 – 5)**

##### ***Invite DOH and DSHS to join Early Learning Partnership (Recommendation 3):***

1. Invite DOH and DSHS leadership to participate in the partnership (near-term).
2. Involve DOH and DSHS leaders and directors as appropriate for the work (mid-term).

##### ***Continue annual priorities and develop consultation process with ELAC (Recommendation 4):***

1. Develop process for engaging ELAC and regional coalitions in review and comment on partnership annual priorities (mid-term).

##### ***Enhance communication between Washington Early Learning Partnership and regional and local early learning partners (Recommendation 5):***

1. Create an online tool for posting current and future statewide initiatives and actions (mid-term).

#### **Early Learning Advisory Council (Recommendations 6 – 8)**

##### ***Strengthen ELAC's advisory function in the early learning system (Recommendation 6):***

1. Adopt the Recommendations (near-term).
2. Confirm the ELAC staffing configuration and operations budget (near-term).

##### ***Clarify how ELAC will carry out focused functions (Recommendation 7):***

1. Create an Ad Hoc Transition Committee (mid-term).
2. Create initial ELAC Work Plan (mid-term).
3. Develop Council Charter, Ground Rules, Member Roles and Responsibilities (mid-term).
4. Create the New Member Orientation Process (mid-term).
5. Hold a Transition Retreat (mid-term).
6. Institute strengthened functions and processes (mid-term).

##### ***Expand ELAC membership (Recommendation 8):***

1. Define the interim "Regional Advisor" role and the support needed (near-term).
2. Invite coalitions to identify a Regional Advisor to participate in ELAC (near-term).
3. Use the recommended nominations and appointments process to identify new members as terms for existing members expire (mid-term).

4. Amend ELAC Authorizing Legislation to expand membership and further specify ELAC's roles (mid-term).

#### **Regional Coalitions (Recommendations 9 – 11)**

##### ***Strengthen Regional Coalitions (Recommendation 9):***

1. Work with state-level partners to create a stable funding source for coalition capacity (ongoing).
2. Establish a well-understood and accepted regional governance structure (near-term).
3. Ensure skilled and credible leadership (near-term and ongoing).
4. Ensure credibility, relevance, and needed expertise and infrastructure (mid-term and ongoing).

##### ***Increase engagement of diverse stakeholders (Recommendation 10):***

1. Articulate ways, in addition to membership, that parents, businesses, elected officials, and other interested parties can share their voice and affiliate with the coalition (mid-term).
2. Engage communities of color in regional initiatives (long-term and ongoing).
3. Engage other communities that are far from opportunity (long-term and ongoing).
4. Engage people who make and influence decisions in the breadth of program areas that make up the region's early learning system (long-term and ongoing).
5. Raise public awareness of and participation in regional and state initiatives (such as Infant Toddler support, Early Achievers, WaKIDS, Love.Talk.Play., etc.) (long-term and ongoing).

##### ***Strengthen joint local, regional and state action (Recommendation 11):***

1. Ensure a transparent, effective and aligned process for agenda setting (near-term).
2. Implement prioritized strategies through use of an *Action Plan* (mid-term).
3. Select and support a regional advisor to participate in the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) (near-term).
4. Promote use of statewide performance goals to assess how well we are doing in coordinating action and delivering results (mid-term, depending on state process).
5. Establish/strengthen advocacy capacity mid-term and ongoing).

## II. PURPOSES OF PROJECT

*In Washington, we work together so that all children start life with a solid foundation for success, based on strong families and a world-class early learning system for all children prenatal through third grade. Accessible, accountable, and developmentally and culturally appropriate, our system partners with families to ensure that every child is healthy, capable and confident in school and in life.*

Vision Statement, *Washington Early Learning Plan*

Washington's 10-year *Early Learning Plan* sets forth a vision for working together so all children can be healthy, capable and confident in school and in life. Our state's early learning system, prenatal through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, partners with families to work toward this vision.

*"I think we as a state are well on our way to make lasting improvements coordinating the many facets that contribute to quality early childhood education."*

Quote from Round 2 survey responses

Working together successfully requires coordination of services and programs so that they meet the needs of children and families, are easy for families to find and use, and work together to get better results. The *Early Learning Plan* includes a strategy (#34) related to coordination:

"Build statewide infrastructure for partnerships and mobilizations." This improved coordination infrastructure is

also key to the success of a number of other plan strategies. These include: "Build a continuum of infant and toddler services and programs" (#4); "Ensure developmental screening" (#6); and "Align prekindergarten and K-3 instructional and programmatic practices" (#27).

Policy makers at the state and federal levels have also recognized the importance of coordination among services and programs, and among state and local efforts. The state legislation for the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) and the federal Head Start Act both require improved coordination of the early learning system. (See Appendix A for ELAC's authorizing language and Appendix B for the Head Start Act section about State Advisory Councils.)

Many individuals, organizations, government agencies and professions help to care for, nurture and

*"When parents contact one agency they hear, 'No, we don't do that, you'll have to contact agency Y.' They have to be very determined and persistent to get help."*

Quote from stakeholder interviews

educate young children. In addition, many people and organizations have worked hard over the last decade to build a connected early learning system from prenatal through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The pieces of the system are in place in Washington and working well on an individual basis. What is needed now is to increase the connections across state and regional levels and across disciplines, create more and

better ways to share information, and ensure that the early learning system is meeting the needs of children and families across the state.

The Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the public-private partnership Thrive by Five Washington (Thrive) formed the Washington Early Learning State and Local Coordination Project to get a better understanding of these

challenges and to seek solutions. The project's purpose is to identify a structure that can bring the *Early Learning Plan* vision into reality. The ultimate goal is to improve the lives of young children and families.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### Groups Guiding the Project

**Steering Committee.** A 29-member, statewide Steering Committee guided the State and Local Coordination Project's work, participated in the research steps and shaped the recommendations. The members (see list below) represented the range of agencies, organizations and professions involved with early learning, and came from different areas of the state. The Steering Committee, a subcommittee of ELAC, met in person or by conference call 12 times [as of 3/20/13 mtg] between March 2012 and March 2013.

**Table 2. Steering Committee Members**

| Name                | Title   | Organization  | Location           |
|---------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| Angela Abrams       | Early Learning Quality Improvement Coordinator              | Educational Service District 105  | Yakima             |
| Bianca Bailey       | Member<br>Member<br>Board of Directors                      | ELAC<br>DEL Parent Advisory Group<br>Bright Beginnings of Kittitas County | Ellensburg         |
| Jody Becker-Green   | Senior Director of Planning, Performance and Accountability | Department of Social and Health Services                                  | Olympia            |
| Kelli Bohanon       | Assistant Director  | Department of Early Learning  | Olympia            |
| Elizabeth Bonbright | Executive Director  | Child Care Aware of Washington  | Tacoma             |
| Paula Bond          | Principal   | Geiger Montessori School  | Tacoma             |
| Samantha Bowen      | Director of Early Learning                                  | Educational Service District 123  | Pasco              |
| Molly Boyajian      | Director of Policy and Community Partnerships               | Thrive by Five Washington   | Seattle            |
| Bob Butts           | Assistant Superintendent for Early Learning                 | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction                            | Olympia            |
| Annette Dieker      | ECCS Program Manager  | Washington State Department of Health                                     | Olympia            |
| Leslie Dozono       | Early Learning Policy Director                              | Children's Alliance   | Seattle            |
| Yolanda Esquivel    | Center Director   | WSMC - College Place Child Development Center                             | Walla Walla        |
| Kathy Goebel        | Associate Director  | Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges                | Olympia            |
| Debbie Ham          | Director  | SELF  | Vancouver          |
| Lauren Hipp         | Policy Manager  | Thrive by Five Washington   | Seattle            |
| Sage MacLeod        | ECEAP Coordinator   | San Juan ECEAP  | Eastsound          |
| Lois Martin         | Member<br>Director  | ELAC<br>Community Day Center for Children                                 | Seattle<br>Seattle |
| Judy Nelson         | Customer Experience Manager – Youth                         | Pierce County Library System  | Tacoma             |
| Sandy Nelson        | Member  | ELAC  | Tumwater           |

| Name              | Title   | Organization   | Location          |
|-------------------|---|--|-------------------|
|                   | Assistant Superintendent, Early Learning  | Educational Service District 113                               | Tumwater          |
| Erin Okuno        | Program Officer   | Foundation for Early Learning                                  | Seattle           |
| Deeann Puffert    | Chief Executive Officer   | Child Care Resources   | Seattle           |
| Shanthi Raghu     | Teacher Education Center Coordinator  | University Child Development School                            | Seattle           |
| Shaine Schramling | Program Manager, First Teacher and Parenting Matters Programs                       | Parenting Matters Foundation                                   | Bainbridge Island |
| Sandra Szambelan  | Director, Center for Early Childhood Services                                       | Educational Service District 101                               | Spokane           |
| Rebecca Timmen    | Project LAUNCH State Coordinator/ Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Coordinator | Prevention and Community Health Division, Department of Health | Tumwater          |
| Nancy Vernon      | Program Administrator, SLC, ELAC, I/T Regional Systems & Services                   | Department of Early Learning                                   | Olympia           |
| Karen Walker      | Program Administrator, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program               | Department of Early Learning                                   | Olympia           |
| Sue Winn          | Co-Chair<br>Family Child Care Provider  | ELAC<br>The Pumpkin Patch Childcare                            | LaConner          |
| Susan Yang        | Program Manager   | Foundation for Early Learning                                  | Seattle           |

**Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC).** ELAC, in its role of making recommendations to DEL, has guided the State and Local Coordination Project by establishing as a subcommittee the project's Steering Committee. Seven of the Steering Committee members were also ELAC members. ELAC provided full group review and comment throughout the project, with briefings at nine [as of 4/8/13] ELAC meetings between December 2011 and April 2013. ELAC approved the preliminary recommendations for public review, and the final recommendations for this report.

**Partnership Group.** The Washington Early Learning Partnership members (DEL, OSPI and Thrive) cosponsored and made decisions related to the project. The partnership's representatives for the project included: Nina Auerbach (Thrive by Five Washington), Bob Butts (OSPI), and Bette Hyde (DEL).

**Staff Work Group.** Staff representing the partnership members met regularly with the consultant team to provide advice and guidance throughout the project. They reviewed and commented on documents, and provided advice on agendas for the Steering Committee and ELAC. The staff work group members included: from DEL – Kelli Bohanon, Nancy Vernon and Deanna Stewart; from Thrive – Molly Boyajian and Lauren Hipp; and from OSPI – Bob Butts.

**Consultant team.** The project consultant team included Cedar River Group, Dovetailing and Tu Consulting, all located in Seattle. The National Equity Project, located in Oakland, California, conducted the project's cultural competency review.

## Guiding Principles

The Steering Committee adopted the principles below in July 2012 to guide its work. These principles add to the *Early Learning Plan* “Guiding Principles for Development of Washington’s Early Learning System,” which are the foundation for this project’s recommendations. See Appendix C.

1. **Has high potential to increase benefit and improve outcomes.** Offers great value for children and families. The benefits are worth the cost.
2. **Improves effectiveness and efficiency.** Helps programs be more effective, simpler and more efficient. Helps to align programs and systems with each other. Streamlines policy and regulation. Ensures that policies work for Washington’s diverse communities and cultures.
3. **Promotes use of data to improve accountability and program quality.** Encourages programs and services to set goals and make decisions based on data. Promotes using that data for continuous quality improvement and to encourage innovation.
4. **Advances equity and raises the bar.** Advances racial and income equity. Reduces gaps in services. Engages the voices of the parents and communities whose children have the least access to opportunity.
5. **Is doable, feasible and builds on strengths.** Builds on existing efforts. Offers a feasible path to carry out the change. Will have positive effects and is likely to succeed. Has or can attract funding for state and local infrastructure.
6. **Uses the power of combining state guidance with local flexibility.** Sets statewide outcomes and parameters, and relies on local communities to tailor the specifics to their needs. Promotes accountability at all levels.
7. **Solidifies and accelerates gains.** Creates structures where people can work together to create visible results, boost gains and build a platform for future action. Aligns efforts from prenatal through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and across systems. Advances high quality in services, supports and education. Uses public and private resources from the state and from local communities to reinforce one another.
8. **Fosters high performing state and local partnerships that work together to improve results.** Creates clear two-way communication between state and local partners, with regular opportunities to give/get feedback. Promotes accountability and transparent decision-making. State partners seek and value local voice and influence in setting statewide policy and priorities. Local partners work together to advance statewide priorities and goals.
9. **Brings the right people to the table at all levels.** Engages people who can make things happen statewide and locally. Engages families and communities in decision-making, especially those with the greatest need for services.
10. **Creates momentum.** Engenders broad support and builds public will.

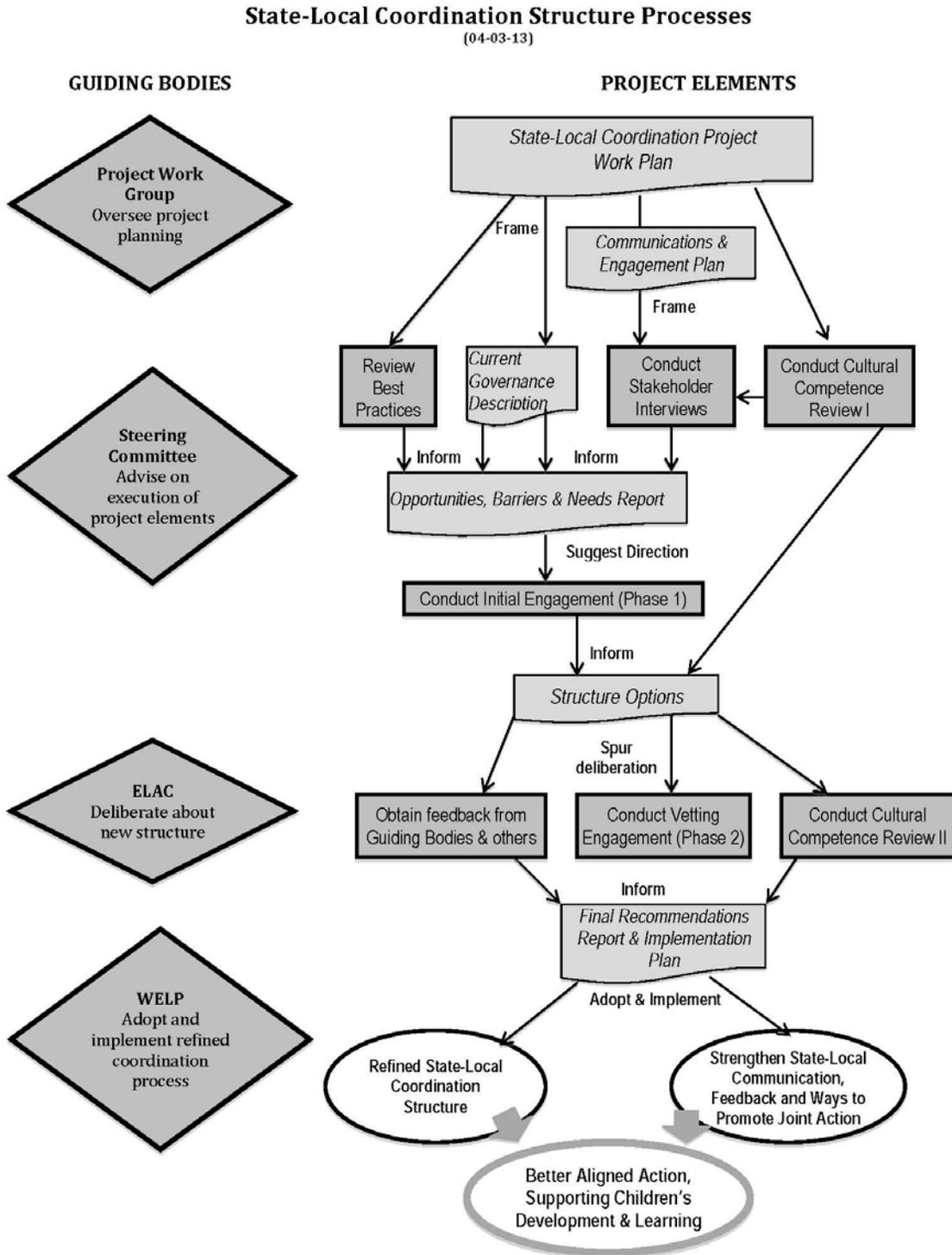
*“Bringing more people to the table that more fully represent the state and the needs of the people will provide a more accurate picture of the challenges. It will also allow for more accurate information to be exchanged.”*

From Round 2 survey responses

## Project Elements

Figure 1 on the next page shows the structure and elements of the project. Sections IV through VII below provide details about the project’s community research, two rounds of public engagement, cultural competence review, and development of the recommendations.

Figure 1. Project Processes



## Public Inclusion and Communication

The project partners were committed to sharing information about the project as the work progressed and engaging the public in shaping the recommendations. The project developed a Communications and Engagement Strategy (see Appendix D) with the goals of sharing information widely and seeking public comment at key points. The steps were as follows:

- **Web page.** Created a project web page on DEL's website. The web page explained the project's purpose, linked to key documents and offered opportunities to comment.
- **Round 1 and Round 2 Engagement.** There were two rounds of public engagement. The first asked for review of the community research and lists of barriers and opportunities. The second asked for review of the Steering Committee's preliminary recommendations. See Sections VI and VIII below.
  - **Notices about the public review** and invitations inviting public comment were shared in a number of ways. These included: mailing to two DEL list serves; posting in DEL's monthly newsletter, Facebook page and Twitter feed; direct invitations from Steering Committee members to their individual networks; email to 131 key organizations and individuals in communities of color; and briefings at relevant meetings and events when feasible. Additionally, the first round of engagement included email invitations to the 150 contacts interviewed during the community research phase of the project. The second round of public engagement included email invitations to those who had commented in round 1, and had provided contact information so as to receive updates about the project. (See Section VI Round 1 Public Engagement, and Section VIII Round 2 Public Engagement for more about the public review process and results.)
  - **Engagement materials** were provided online through a Survey Monkey link and electronically as fillable forms that could be emailed back, or printed out, completed in hard copy, and returned by fax or mail. Materials were translated into Spanish, and were available in other languages by request. A packet to support facilitation of group discussions was also created and provided to Steering Committee members for use in group settings.
- **Project update emails.** The project sent update emails to DEL's listserv, to key contacts in communities of color, to those who participated in the project's stakeholder interviews, and to those who responded to the comment opportunities and asked for updates. The topics of the updates were: (1) the project and its purpose, schedule and process (sent in March 2012); (2) results of first round of public comment (September 2012); and (3) results of the second round of public comment (February 2013). In addition, there will be an update when the project's final recommendations and implementation plan are available.

## IV. COMMUNITY RESEARCH

The project undertook community research to better understand the early learning system in Washington and how it might be improved. This research consisted of: (1) developing a diagram of Washington’s current early learning system; (2) researching national best practices for early learning coordination and the functions of an early learning system; (3) interviewing stakeholders in Washington to learn more about the challenges for early learning coordination and ideas for solutions; and (4) using the best practices review and interviews to create a needs assessment in the form of a list of barriers and opportunities to improve coordination.

### Current Coordination Structure

The project’s first task was to describe the common understanding of how coordination of early learning currently works. The consultant team developed a graphic of Washington’s current early learning system. The project Steering Committee, ELAC, members of the public who attended ELAC meetings and four state agencies provided comments, which were then incorporated into the graphic. See Appendix E.

### National Best Practices Review

The project reviewed how other states coordinate their early learning system to gather ideas and lessons learned. This research had two objectives:

- Gather information and lessons learned from other states about their state and local early learning coordination structures and methods.
- Gather information about what elements of coordination have resulted in improvements in child outcomes, in program effectiveness and efficiency, and in maintaining and expanding state and local funds for early learning.

Karen Ponder of the BUILD Initiative (a national organization that helps states build comprehensive early childhood systems) provided information about six states that have had formal state and local

*“There must be someone who stays awake at night thinking about the big picture.”*

From Best Practices research report

coordination structures in place long enough to have a track record and have made changes/ improvements over time.

The Steering Committee recommended focusing on three states—North Carolina, Arizona and Oklahoma—that have received national recognition for creating different aspects

of “best practice” models for coordination. The consulting team reviewed print and online materials, and interviewed one key leader from each of the three states. See Appendix F for the full summary of the best practices research.

The project found that North Carolina, Arizona and Oklahoma have the same focus in coordinating early learning: early care and education, family support, and health systems. Each is mandated to focus on prenatal or birth to 5 years old or kindergarten entry. Each also has a well-developed system for coordinating state efforts with a network of local partnerships.

However, in other ways, the three states take different approaches. North Carolina and Arizona both have state-level organizations—North Carolina’s a nonprofit (called Smart Start) and Arizona’s a public agency (called First Things First). Both have boards appointed and controlled by the Governor and Legislature. Both state-level agencies allocate significant funding to local communities. In North Carolina funds go to local partnerships, each a private not-for-profit organization, which are accountable for funding decisions and outcomes. In Arizona, local partnerships assess needs and make funding recommendations to the state-level organization, which makes funding decisions and is accountable for outcomes. Oklahoma’s structure is a little different, with a public-private board appointed by the Governor and called the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, which coordinates at the state level. This board is staffed by a nonprofit, called Smart Start Oklahoma.

*“Durable leadership structures for collaborating at the state and local levels must become part of the fabric of the early learning system.”*

From Best Practices research report

On the local level, North Carolina has a network of 77 private, nonprofit, local Smart Start partnerships. The state-level Smart Start connects with these local groups. Arizona has 31 regional councils of volunteers (rather than nonprofits), which are staffed by the state-level First Things First. Oklahoma has 18 local coalitions called Smart Start Communities, which cover 52 of the state’s 77 counties.

The State and Local Coordination project also asked leaders from the three states for the key lessons they have learned in creating a structure to coordinate state and local early learning programs and services. They offered the following lessons:

1. **Leadership structure.** Building a system and integrating its parts is complex and takes time. Durable leadership structures for collaborating at the state and local levels must become part of the fabric of the early learning system. A solid leadership structure is key for withstanding changes in leadership and overcoming resistance to change.
2. **State-level coordination.** A state coordinating body should include: (a) all the state-level agencies that manage significant parts of the early learning system; (b) representatives of local partnerships; and (c) other key partners.
3. **Place for big-picture discussion.** There must be a “place” to have important conversations about improving systems and outcomes. Children need it all, not just family support, health or education. When programs are in silos and unconnected, children fall through the cracks.
4. **Local collaborations.** Strong local collaborations enable partners to interact with one another and with state agencies in consistent and meaningful ways. These collaborations are essential to building a family-centered early learning system, improving outcomes and boosting public will.
5. **Staffing.** Both local partnerships and state level coordination need staffing to be effective. There must be sufficient resources to support the state and local coordination infrastructure.
6. **Continuous improvement.** A culture and practice of continuous improvement and innovation is essential to improving services, and making the system more effective and efficient.
7. **Performance goals.** State and local partners need to agree on a limited number of statewide performance goals to track. By doing so, they can hold one another accountable, know what data to collect, and create continuous quality improvement.
8. **Two-way communication.** State-local communication and opportunities to give and get feedback are vitally important. Communication and feedback help to: (a) keep people at local

and state levels informed and engaged; (b) surface challenges and opportunities; and (c) create a sense of identity in the larger effort. Communication is key to building and sustaining a connected state-local early learning system that gets results for children.

## Early Learning System Functions

From the national BUILD Initiative<sup>2</sup>, the best practices research and other sources, the project identified six essential functions of an early learning system, shown in the table below. Agencies/organizations at each level of the early learning system may carry out some of the same functions, but will have different roles in that work.

**Table 3. Essential Functions of an Early Learning System**

| Function                                       | Description   |
|--|---|
| 1. Set Standards, Goals and Outcomes.          | Includes assessing needs and assets, and setting standards, goals, and the desired outcomes for early learning services and programs.                                       |
| 2. Set Priorities and Choose Strategies.       | Involves setting priorities and choosing strategies to meet the goals, setting guidelines for carrying them out, and learning from experience with strategies and programs. |
| 3. Ensure Funding and Policy Support.          | Involves understanding the level of support needed, securing funding from a variety of sources, and gaining decision-makers' support.                                       |
| 4. Implement and Expand Services and Programs. | Involves choosing services and programs to meet identified needs, deciding how to implement and scale up, and identifying opportunities to expand.                          |
| 5. Build Public Understanding and Public Will. | Involves public awareness and education activities, cultivating champions, and working with advocates and other partners.   |
| 6. Be Accountable for Achieving Outcomes.      | Includes gathering data, conducting evaluation, conducting quality improvement processes, and reporting results.  |

## Stakeholder Interviews

Between March and June 2012, the consultant team interviewed 150 stakeholders statewide (34 individuals and 17 focus groups involving 116 people). Twenty-five percent of the individual stakeholders interviewed were people of color. The purposes were to develop a clear understanding of

*“Local entities need to drive design of what will work best in their communities.”*

From stakeholder interviews

how stakeholders perceive the current practices for early learning coordination, and to learn their aspirations and ideas for strengthening the state and local coordination of early learning programs and services in our state. The people interviewed represented a balance of those working at the

state level and those at the local level, and many of the fields involved in early learning prenatal through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Since the State and Local Coordination Project was focused on systems development, the interviews included parents and child care providers, but primarily focused on state and local early learning leaders. The team aimed for diversity by geographic location, community size and race/ethnicity.

<sup>2</sup> Karen Ponder, “Building Early Childhood Systems: The Collaborative Leadership and Accountability Model” (BUILD), August 2011, 8-9.

Themes from these interviews included the following:

- **Coordination efforts that work well.** Groups that many interviewees mentioned as being effective in bringing people in early learning together to share information and resources were: the Early Learning Coalitions; Infant-Toddler Regions; state and county Interagency Coordinating Councils; the Washington State Association of Head Start and Early Childhood Education and

*“Previously there was nothing to connect to, but now there is with the Washington Early Learning Plan and the Early Learning Partnership.”*

*“Just because children don’t meet the eligibility threshold for services doesn’t mean they don’t have needs.”*

*“It’s hard for Spanish-speaking parents to find out about and apply for subsidies, and to find Spanish-speaking providers.”*

*“Parents don’t feel they have any voice. The people making the policies aren’t visible and don’t ask for families’ input.”*

*“When the systems begin to work together, like food benefits using the same documentation as child care assistance, then we will know it is working better.”*

From stakeholder interviews

Assistance Program (ECEAP); the Starting Strong Conferences; and local community collaborations. They found the processes for developing the *Early Learning Plan* and the *Early Learning and Development Guidelines* to be good examples of involving interested people and welcoming input. They said that Child Care Aware agencies, Educational Service Districts (ESDs), the Foundation for Early Learning, WithinReach, the online Washington Connection, and licensing staff are good at offering connections to information and resources. They found Thrive by Five’s and DEL’s email updates, and ESD’s monthly telephone calls to be effective communication methods.

- **Not working or missing.** Frequent comments about what is not working included the following. Agencies seem to work in silos. There are gaps in access and services. There are many barriers for parents to find and use services. There is a need for parent engagement. There are language and

cultural barriers to accessing services. More early intervention services are needed and better transitions between services. There is sometimes confusion at the regional and local levels about policy changes and new initiatives.

- **Ideas to improve state and local coordination.** Interviewees offered a number of ideas for facilitating local work; clarifying state and local roles; working cross-sector; increasing two-way communication; providing opportunities to share information; involving parents; increasing culturally competent practices; coordinating decision-making; and developing a continuous quality improvement process.

See Appendix G for the interview questions and a full summary of the stakeholder interviews.

## Barriers and Opportunities

Based on the project’s community research, the Steering Committee developed lists of key barriers and opportunities. As used here, “barriers” are what makes it hard to find and use early learning services and programs, and “opportunities” can help to improve state and local coordination of services and programs. The project identified two types of barriers. One was barriers of capacity, such as lack of funding, staff or resources. The other was coordination barriers, such as lack of connections between services. The tables below provide the lists of key barriers and opportunities.

**Table 4. Key Barriers to Coordination of Early Learning Services**

| Capacity Barriers   | Coordination Barriers   |
|---|---|
| 1. It is hard for families to access the services they need.  | 1. It is hard for families to find information and to “navigate” the system.  |
| 2. There are not enough providers for some types of services.   | 2. The transition from early learning to elementary school is tough for families.   |
| 3. There are not enough people who meet professional standards in some parts of the state and in some communities of color.                                 | 3. Some communities, such as those in rural areas and, or refugee and immigrant communities, are isolated and have unique challenges.                     |
| 4. Too few early learning and K-12 teachers have the preparation and tools to support children’s learning in developmentally and culturally competent ways. | 4. Too few state and local leaders and providers know about programs, issues and plans outside their program “silos.”                                     |
|   | 5. There is not enough two-way communication and planning between the state and local communities.  |
|   | 6. There are no common measures of program, system and child outcomes that both the state and local communities use to show value and focus improvements. |
|   | 7. Agencies use different geographic boundaries for their initiatives.  |

**Table 5. Key Opportunities To Improve State and Local Coordination of Services**

| Key Opportunities   |
|---|
| 1. Create an easy way for all families to learn about and access early learning, family support and health services.  |
| 2. Engage and empower the families and communities whose children are experiencing the greatest disparities to help plan services, and to monitor progress and results.                   |
| 3. Promote early learning partnerships that can coordinate local early learning efforts in every part of the state.   |
| 4. Create intentional, formal connections and two-way communication between state and regional coordinating bodies.   |
| 5. Strengthen state-level coordination of early learning, family support, health, and child welfare services across agencies and organizations.   |
| 6. Create a consistent, single place for community and school leaders to learn about planned and new state initiatives.   |
| 7. Select a handful of meaningful goals and indicators to monitor progress and results for young children and their families statewide and locally.                                       |
| 8. Create state and local continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes to understand what is and is not working well, and identify ways to improve services and systems.                |
| 9. Create a consistent framework and universal values to guide the development of new initiatives and system building efforts.  |
| 10. Provide more opportunities that set statewide funding goals and accountability measures and allow the flexibility for communities to tailor implementation plans to meet local needs. |
| 11. Promote public awareness of the importance of early learning, and strengthen public will to support children’s success.   |

## V. FIRST CULTURAL COMPETENCE REVIEW

One of the State and Local Coordination Project's goals was to ensure that the coordination structure and methods will recognize the diversity of communities in the state in ways that enable those who are farthest from opportunity to participate. To work toward this goal, project sponsors DEL, OSPI and Thrive asked the National Equity Project to provide formal cultural competence review. The National Equity Project conducted this review at two stages of the project: the process for community research and the preliminary recommendations.

The first cultural competence review took place in the spring of 2012 while the stakeholder interviews were underway. The review addressed two questions:

1. Is the project process/structure set up in a way that will be sensitive to issues of racial and cultural equity? Are there any improvements you would suggest?
2. Is the approach to engagement and communication designed to capture issues regarding racial and cultural equity? Are there any improvements you would suggest?

For this review the National Equity Project used the Racial Equity Theory of Change (RETOC) tool that early learning stakeholders in Washington have created. The reviewers found that the project's overall

*"Will the intention of greater aligned action result in structures that support greater access to early learning for children furthest away from opportunity?"*

National Equity Project, Cultural Competence Planning and Review

process and communications and engagement plan would enable using a "racial equity lens" to identify how the current system contributes to disproportionate or racialized outcomes. They define a "racial equity lens" as a way to uncover the structure, policies and behaviors that sustain unequal outcomes for children. The reviewers found the stakeholder interview process to be "very generic," that is, the same for everyone, rather than adjusted to call out racial, cultural or geographic differences. However, they found that the public engagement tracking instrument had the potential to map the interaction of race and geography in the state.

The reviewers recommended: (1) scheduling cultural competence review meetings at key steps in the project's work; (2) discussing how each guiding body for the project might share responsibility for holding a racial equity lens, and share documents or processes that would help carry forward attention to racial equity; (3) creating a separate version of the stakeholder interview questions for parents; and (4) using more inclusive language.

In response, the Steering Committee and consultant team took the following actions:

- Raised questions of racial equity in discussions with ELAC, the Steering Committee, the staff work group, and partnership members regarding the guiding principles, preliminary recommendations, and the other project elements.
- Ensured that notices about opportunities to comment were sent to a list of key organizations and individuals in communities of color.
- Worked to reflect the appropriate use of language suggested by the National Equity Project, for example by using such words as "inclusion" or "intake" instead of "outreach."

The focus groups and interviews were already completed, so there was not an opportunity to create separate sets of questions. However, those conducting the interviews had individualized the discussions within the framework of the interview questions so as to get to issues of racial equity.

See Appendix H and Appendix I for the National Equity Project’s full cultural competence review and the response from the State and Local Coordination Project consulting team.

## VI. ROUND 1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The project’s first round of public engagement took place between June 21 and August 3, 2012. The project posted on DEL’s website the lists of key barriers and opportunities to a strong early learning

*“There are good programs in place but not enough access for all the families in need.”*

*“Leverage existing work, and take things to greater scale.”*

*There is no well articulated mechanism for promoting coordination and collaboration at the local level and between local and state level. Would like to see local coordinating councils, maybe by county, that are composed of all services including special education and that communicate with ELAC.”*

*“Local control and access is key. Each community is different and the families should be able to access programs that fit them culturally.”*

*“Develop partnerships with local agencies such as schools and public libraries to offer family-based programs to further early learning.”*

*“Until we as a nation understand the importance of early childhood education for ALL children and help parents understand the importance of their role, the issue of lack of funding will continue.”*

From Round 1 survey responses

system that the Steering Committee developed. As noted above in the description of the project’s communication and engagement work, DEL sent notices to multiple email lists to invite people to review and comment on the project’s findings so far. The project sponsors encouraged everyone reviewing the summary to offer their own comments using an online survey form linked from the webpage.

### Who Responded

There were a total of 175 responses to the survey: 174 from individuals and one from an organization. Respondents were from across the state, with the largest number from the Northwest and Southeast regions. Respondents who identified their primary early learning roles were fairly evenly distributed among roles. The top three roles (50 or more respondents each) were “child care and preschool,” “preparation and training of early childhood professionals,” and “advocate or volunteer.” Those who offered their affiliation listed a wide range of organizations. Only 65 respondents (37 percent) provided their race/ethnicity. They self-identified as follows: 51 Caucasian/white, seven Hispanic, three Asian, two Native American, and two using other race/ethnicity descriptions. The 113 respondents who answered a question about their involvement with specific communities or groups listed a diverse range of perspectives. These included: early learning coalitions and groups; child care and preschool; culturally diverse organizations; government agencies; educational organizations and schools; and community-based groups.

The goal of project’s public engagement was to hear from people interested in the early learning system, who are involved in the variety of fields that support children’s early learning and health, and who represent Washington’s diversity in geography and in race/ethnicity. The 175 respondents did span the

various fields involved in early learning and health, and were geographically diverse. The question about race/ethnicity was voluntary, so it is difficult to know if those who chose to answer reflect the diversity of all respondents.

## What Respondents Said

More than 85 percent of the 175 survey respondents rated the lists of key barriers and key opportunities as describing the barriers and opportunities “well” or “very well.” The following are the major themes that emerged from the survey responses:

*“Families aren’t aware that certain programs exist or even what to start looking for.”*

*“These barriers are found in some communities and not in others. Smaller communities struggle a lot and the families and providers are not being heard.”*

*“Language barriers are impactful on families and children whose primary language is not English.”*

From Round 1 survey responses

- There are many direct service/access challenges. A majority of respondents would like to “create an easy way for families to learn about and access early learning, family support and health services.” More than half of respondents ranked this as one of the top three opportunities.
- The opportunity listed as “promote public awareness of early learning’s importance and strengthen public will” received a high ranking. This suggests that respondents see this work as crucial to serving families better and providing the support needed to enhance funding for early learning.
- There was strong interest in improving the quality and breadth of early learning services to meet the

needs of our state’s diverse populations. Respondents said that rural areas, communities of color and multilingual populations continue to experience unique challenges that the current early learning system is not meeting.

- There is high interest in local partnership opportunities as a means to: better coordinate local and regional activities; create a meaningful local voice in state policies and programs; and strengthen communication.
- Many respondents urged that enhancements to the early learning system build on what is working.
- There is strong support for the state to establish program and funding goals, but to provide some flexibility for implementation at the local level.
- Nearly a quarter of those responding to the survey said they would like to see the state follow up on Key Opportunity 5: “Strengthen state-level coordination of early learning, family support, health and child welfare services across agencies and organizations.”

In addition, some respondents suggested additional barriers and opportunities. The primary themes from those comments were about the need for: additional funding to support families and early learning providers; and improved communication with families, early learning providers, teachers and communities.

See Appendix J for the full summary of results from the survey.

## VII. DEVELOPMENT OF PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Steering Committee used the community research and results of the first public engagement to

*“Getting all the different agencies working together for the common goal will help us reach more families in our community, to have a stronger VOICE of how important these early years are!”*

From Round 2 survey responses

begin considering options for enhancing state and local coordination that would help everyone who aims to improve children’s early learning and development to strengthen each other’s efforts.

**Early learning system.** To do this, the Steering Committee looked at structures to connect all parts of the state’s early learning system into a stronger, unified whole.

Washington’s early learning system includes a number of

independent systems, such as:

- Prenatal care
- Child care and preschool
- Birth to five continuum of services, such as: home visiting; family, friend and neighbor caregivers; and early intervention services
- Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- Indian Tribes and Nations
- Health and nutrition
- Social-emotional development and mental health
- Parent and community partnerships
- Parenting education and resources
- Higher education in child development and early childhood education
- Professional development for early learning professionals
- Child welfare
- Libraries

**Objectives.** At a September 2012 meeting, the Steering Committee developed the following “Objectives for an Effective State-Local Coordination Structure”:

1. Follow the “Principles To Guide Development of the State and Local Coordination Structure,” which the Steering Committee adopted in July 2012, and the Guiding Principles in the state’s *Early Learning Plan*.
2. Use the existing elements of the early learning system, and build on and enhance what is working well. Doing so builds on strengths and can bring positive change more quickly. This was suggested by many people in the stakeholder interviews and online survey.
3. Support state and regional partners in decreasing the “barriers” and taking advantage of “opportunities” for better early learning coordination, as identified in the project’s research, stakeholder interviews and survey responses.
4. Improve coordination among the independent systems that comprise early learning [see list above] at the state and regional levels.

5. Develop and use a handful of statewide goals and measures to: (a) focus state and regional attention to promote quality improvement; (b) improve equity of opportunity; and (c) drive positive change more quickly and efficiently.
6. Involve the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) more effectively in advising on the development of key state policies. This was suggested by the Steering Committee and in the stakeholder interviews.
7. Focus on the three entities in Washington’s early learning system that already have the largest role in coordination. These entities are: at the state level (a) the Washington Early Learning Partnership and (b) ELAC; and at the regional and local level (c) the Early Learning Regional Coalitions.
8. Build on the current Early Learning Regional Coalitions by making these coalitions the regional partners in the state and local coordination system.
9. Build the Plan – Do – Review – Revise continuous quality improvement cycle into the coordination system. Doing so will provide “feedback loops” so that communities can inform policy and system development, as suggested in the *Early Learning Plan*.

**Recommendation elements.** Based on these objectives, the Steering Committee began framing recommendations in terms of:

- The structures, roles and mechanisms that would improve coordination at three levels:
  - Among state-level agencies and organizations.
  - Between the state and regional organizations.
  - Among local organizations and early learning leaders within regions.
- Three overarching issues:
  - Statewide performance goals to focus statewide and local attention to quality improvement, promote equity of opportunity, and drive positive change.
  - A framework for ongoing stakeholder engagement, to ensure that parents, early learning professionals and local communities have a voice in policies and plans.
  - Methods to improve communication among state and local organizations and ELAC.

## VIII. ROUND 2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Between November 20 and December 21, 2012, the project conducted an online survey about the Steering Committee’s preliminary recommendations for improving state and local coordination. These recommendations were posted on DEL’s website. The agencies sponsoring the project encouraged everyone reviewing the preliminary recommendations to offer comments using an online survey form. There were two options for documents to review: Tier 1, a less detailed overview of the preliminary recommendations, and Tier 2, which included more details about the recommendations. The first question in the online survey asked which version the respondent reviewed, and linked to the appropriate set of questions. Most of the respondents (78 percent) chose to review the more detailed version. See Appendix K for the Tier 1 version of the Preliminary Recommendations, and Appendix L for the Tier 2 version.

## Who Responded

There were a total of 223 responses to the survey: 188 from individuals and 35 from a group discussion. Respondents spanned the state, with the largest number from the South Sound and King County. Respondents who identified their primary roles related to early learning were distributed among a range of categories. The top three roles were “licensed child care,” “preschool,” and “advocate or volunteer.” Those who offered their affiliation listed a wide range of organizations.

*“More consistency is needed in rules and regulations to streamline programs; agencies need to be willing to tackle contradictions in RCW and WACs that sabotage a unified approach.”*

*“[Regional coalitions] could be critical piece if effective support is there. Coalitions are made up of community players that have multiple roles, and adding this will need support beyond an annual grant that gets reduced and barely supports the folks that need to be at the table.”*

*“I appreciate very much the Racial Equity work that is being done with the current partnership. I would like to see that resourced and supported at the regional and local level.”*

*“Provide more information to parents and involve them more.”*

*“The mechanisms for two-way communication will help. Gives a clear format for regional work and communicating to the wider community; supports increased networks and communication.”*

*“Up to 40 [for ELAC membership] seems too large to accomplish such a mammoth task.”*

*“Coordination will surely improve with the proposed changes, but I’m not certain that will impact the services children and families receive.”*

From Round 2 survey responses

Sixty (32 percent) of the individual respondents who provided their race/ethnicity self-identified as follows: 48 Caucasian/white, six Hispanic, one Asian American and Pacific Islander, two Native American, one African American, and two multi-racial. In addition, the group discussion included 32 Caucasian, one Native American, one Asian American and one African American participant. The 80 respondents who answered a question about their involvement with particular communities or groups listed a diverse range of perspectives: geographic affiliations, early learning coalitions and groups, child care and preschool, culturally diverse organizations, government agencies, educational organizations and schools, and community-based groups.

## What Respondents Said

In general, a strong majority of both Tier 1 and Tier 2 respondents said they believed the proposed changes would be effective in improving state-local coordination of early learning. Some respondents were skeptical about whether the recommendations would make a difference in improving services for children and families. Others expressed concern about implementation of the recommendations. For example, there were concerns about whether sufficient resources would be available, or whether agency leadership would fully support the recommendations.

The following are the major themes that emerged from the survey respondents’ comments.

**Highest ratings.** Average ratings of the specific recommendations were the highest for:

- Adopting an ELAC work plan (3.24 average rating on a 1 to 4 scale where 4 was “very effective”).
- Increasing stakeholder engagement (3.21 average rating).

- Adopting a handful of statewide performance goals (3.20 average rating).

The majority also liked the recommendations to: add the Department of Health and Department of Social and Health Services to the Washington Early Learning Partnership; expand ELAC's membership to include representatives of the 10 Regional Early Learning Coalitions; increase two-way communication between the state and regional/local groups; and more clearly define roles.

**Other comments.** In addition to rating the preliminary recommendations, approximately 28 percent of Tier 1 respondents and 23 percent of Tier 2 respondents added comments to their responses. The themes in these comments were:

- A few suggestions for additional agencies to add to the Washington Early Learning Partnership, such as the Department of the Blind and the regional Office of Head Start (a federal agency).
- Several suggestions for additional stakeholder representatives to add to ELAC and/or the Regional Coalitions, some of whom are involved already.

*"This group [regional coalitions] seems to have the potential for improving communication across the state and reaching into local communities and building support for improvements in the system. I think a group of carefully chosen members could really be a very effective change agent for the entire process."*

*"Good start that will be effective if it is a living idea that is adjusted as time goes and need arises to ensure the loop is as effective as planned."*

*"How well these changes work all depends on the commitment of the agency members, how supported they are for their participation in this work and the resulting agency response to any recommendations, assignments or requests."*

From Round 2 survey responses

- A few suggestions for ELAC to make its meetings more accessible by varying the locations across the state and/or using technology, such as K-20 webinars.
- A few respondents urged that all aspects of the system be culturally competent and that representatives of communities of color be consulted.
- A few concerns that the recommendations seemed agency-driven rather than consumer driven, or were too vague or complex.
- Several respondents expressed concerns about implementation, such as orientation needs of new ELAC members and staffing support that Regional Coalitions would need.
- A few suggestions about ways to increase communication between local communities and the state, and ways to increase public awareness about the importance of early learning.

See Appendix M for the full summary of results from the survey.

## IX. SECOND CULTURAL COMPETENCE REVIEW

The National Equity Project conducted the second cultural competence review in December 2012 and January 2013. They reviewed: the Steering Committee's Preliminary Recommendations and several discussion papers leading up to those recommendations; the summary of comments from Round 1 public engagement; and the survey form for Round 2 public engagement. The reviewers again used the

Racial Equity Theory of Change (RETOC) as a guide for designing strategies to close chronic racial outcome gaps.

The cultural competency review had three major recommendations:

1. **Look for ways to align with the RETOC Outcome Map.** The reviewers noted that early learning stakeholders convened by Thrive by Five are developing this outcome map, and recommended reviewing it for examples of the racial equity narrative and opportunities for alignment.
2. **Role of racial equity and cultural inclusion.** For racial equity to be an effective priority in the recommended strategies, the final recommendations need to “demonstrate a consistent explicit

*“The ways in which current practices and policies are differently impacting families and communities is essential data for designing strategies that will address racial equity.”*

National Equity Project, Cultural Competence Review

narrative on the role of racial equity and cultural inclusion in achieving the state’s early learning goals.” The reviewers suggested including examples of disparities that are strongly tied to different opportunities people of color experience, and the practices, policies and cultural representations that contribute to these disparities. They believe these descriptions will provide the context and give urgency to the

recommended building blocks for change, and shed light on the landscape that early learning leaders and stakeholders will need to navigate to effect a change.

3. **Use examples and evidence.** The reviewers recommended that the project keep a focus on racial equity in the recommendations by using examples from the project’s interviews with stakeholders, comments in the two public engagement processes, and available data reports.

See Appendix N for the National Equity Project’s full cultural competence review.

## X. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The thousands of partners who created the *Washington Early Learning Plan* identified “Ready and Successful Parents, Families and Caregivers,” and “Ready and Successful Systems and Communities” as two of the four main areas of focus for this roadmap for building the early learning system in Washington. The state-local coordination recommendations in this report directly advance these areas and three of the *Early Learning Plan* strategies:

- **#21 Create Formal Pathways for Parent Participation:** Expand pathways for parents, families and caregivers to participate in early learning program/system design and in shaping policies.
- **#34 Build Statewide Infrastructure for Partnerships and Mobilization:** Build statewide infrastructure to strengthen partnerships, build capacity and broaden reach and focus local mobilization efforts.
- **#35 Strengthen Public Awareness and Commitment:** Expand public awareness campaigns to deepen the understanding, action and support of local leaders and public to make children a priority.

Four decades of science show that children’s earliest experiences influence their lifelong learning and development. The State and Local Coordination Project’s recommendations aim to build an early learning system that can offer children what they need when they need it, based on child and family requirements, and available resources. We know from a growing body of literature and the experience of 18 states<sup>3</sup> that building this coordinated continuum of services for children and families requires connecting state leaders and local communities, cross-sector state and regional planning, two-way communication, coordinated action and decision-making, and using data for continuous improvement. These recommendations aim to create visible, durable and efficient methods for accomplishing these ends.

The State and Local Coordination Project Steering Committee’s recommendations are a call to act on this knowledge and to create a better way of working together for children. The recommendations include:

- Two overarching recommendations (stakeholder engagement and performance goals) (Recommendations 1 and 2).
- Recommendations to improve coordination and communication at each level of the early learning system: state, state-regional and regional (Recommendations 3 – 11).

## Overarching Recommendations

### Stakeholder Engagement Recommendation

#### Two-way communication

One of the themes that emerged from the project’s public engagement was the importance of creating consistent two-way communication among state agencies and regional partners when agencies are developing major policies and programs. This two-way communication is important for setting common direction, building trust and promoting joint action among all of the early learning partners. Two-way communication can also provide opportunities to gather information about early learning needs and the impact of proposed changes so that we draw from the best of what is happening in our communities. The end result is the formation of policies and programs that meet the needs of our state’s rich diversity of families and communities.

The *Early Learning Plan* Guiding Principles included the need for meaningful stakeholder review and comment on the early learning system’s performance over time.

*“These educational gaps impose on the United States the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession.”*

– *The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America’s Schools*

This project’s community outreach found that those involved in previous early learning planning efforts frequently cited successful experiences collaborating with state agencies. In some instances, stakeholders helped shape recommendations on key issues. For example, a broad range of stakeholders were involved in developing the *Early Learning Plan*, the *Early Learning and Development Guidelines*, and the *Infant and Toddler Interdisciplinary Consultation* plans. However, stakeholders (including members of the Steering

Committee) also mentioned some state agency decisions that have a significant impact on local early

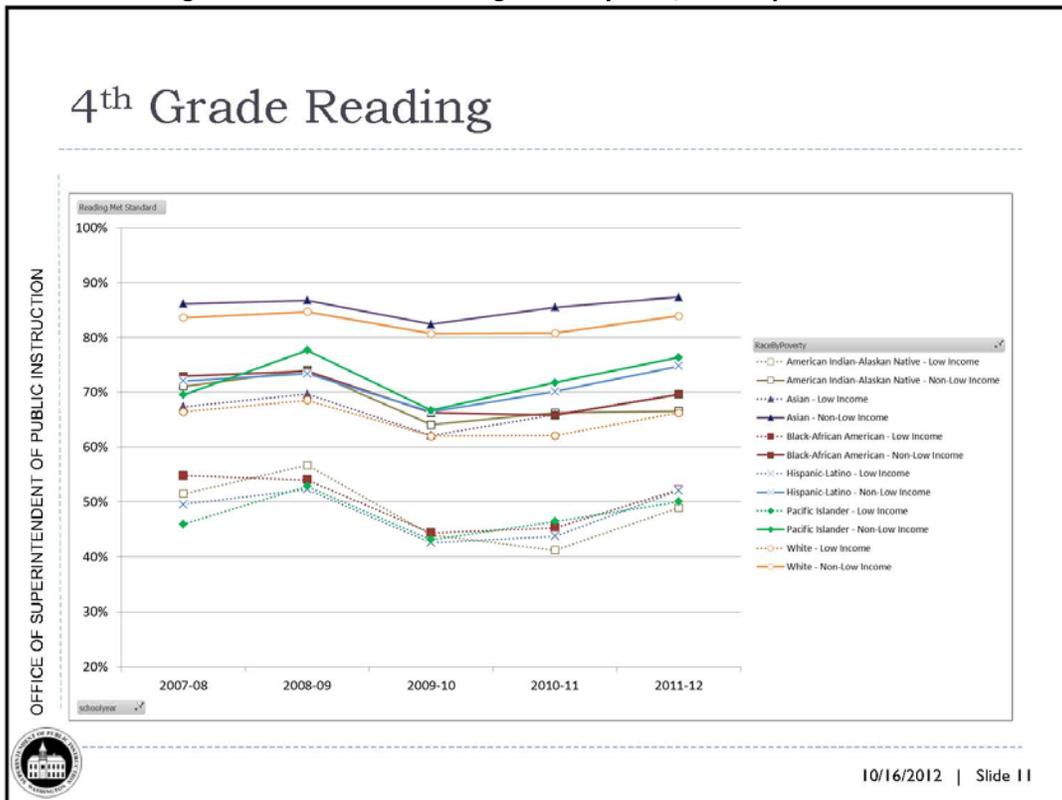
<sup>3</sup> K. Ponder, Building Early Childhood Systems: The Collaborative Leadership and Accountability Model. BUILD Initiative, August 2011.

learning communities in which the communities felt they were not engaged in identifying needs or developing recommendations, which may have resulted in implementation challenges. Steering Committee discussions have confirmed the importance of community voice *and* influence on key early learning decisions.

**Advancing racial equity**

Young children across Washington receive widely differing access to development and learning opportunities from their families, communities, early learning programs and K-12 schools. This difference is called the “opportunity gap.” Figure 2 below, from the “*Closing Opportunity Gaps in Washington’s Public Education System*” (January 2013), shows fourth grade reading scores disaggregated by race/ethnicity and income. This chart illustrates how the opportunity gap results in lower test scores for many children of color and low-income children. It also contributes to higher rates of high school drop-out and lower rates of college completion for children of color and low-income children making it an important human and economic issue for Washington.

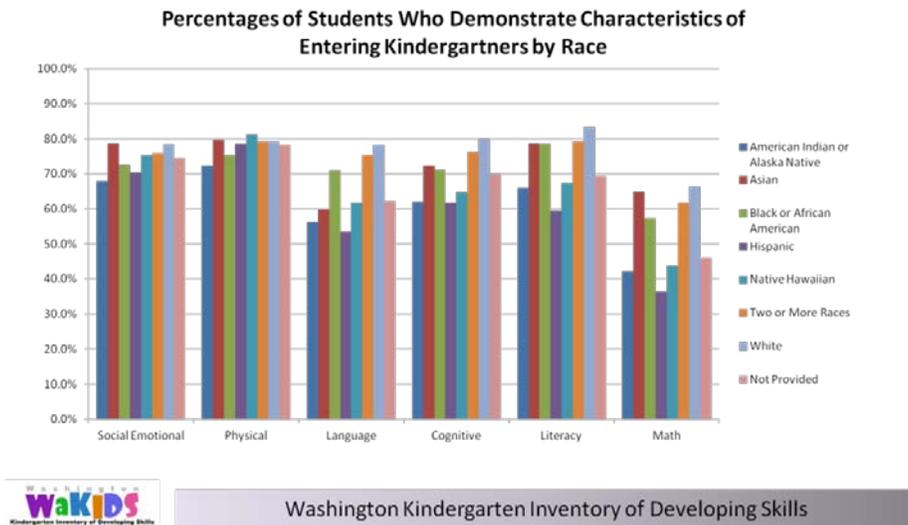
**Figure 2. Fourth Grade Reading Scores by Race/Ethnicity and Income**



The fall 2012 WaKIDS data show that the opportunity gap is clear even as children enter kindergarten. Figure 3 below shows Fall 2012 WaKIDS scores by race/ethnicity.

**Figure 3. WaKIDS Fall 2012 Scores by Race/Ethnicity  
(N = 21,811)**

## The Opportunity Gap is Evident in the First Few Weeks of Kindergarten



The guiding principles the Steering Committee developed for this project included “Advances equity and raises the bar,” and “Engaging the voices of the parents and communities whose children have the least

*“Notably, in some areas, the racial gap has been overcome. For example, Latino students in Ohio outperform white students in 13 other states on the eighth grade NAEP reading test and are seven points ahead of the national average. In Texas, low-income black students have the same average score on the fourth grade NAEP as low-income white students in Alabama.”*

*The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America’s Schools*

access to opportunity.” The second cultural competence review for this State and Local Coordination Project encouraged alignment of the project’s recommendations with the recommendations for the Racial Equity Theory of Change (RETOC) for early learning. Thrive by Five Washington has led this venture with the participation of more than 70 government agencies and community-based organizations.

The Advancing Racial Equity in Early Learning work in our state has prepared an “outcome map” describing possible actions to advance racial equity in the design of

early learning systems and services. The State-Local Coordination Project Steering Committee included several of the suggested actions in the recommendations, as follows:

- Invite communities to participate in decisions about defining outcomes. (Recommendation #1)
- Create feedback loops that allow community participation in course correction. (Recommendations #1 and #2)
- Actively engage tribal leadership in defining desired outcomes and participating in decision-making processes/entities, from the beginning. (Recommendation #8)
- Actively recruit people of color in defining desired outcomes and participating in decision-making processes/entities, from the beginning. (Recommendations #1 and #10)

***RECOMMENDATION 1: Adopt a stakeholder engagement framework for major policy and programmatic issues.***

**Purpose**

The stakeholder engagement framework can assist agencies in determining the levels of engagement that are appropriate to inform different types of state early learning decisions. The proposed framework can help guide decisions about stakeholder engagement for new initiatives, coordination efforts, implementation of new or substantially expanded programs, and major changes in policy or programs that affect children, families or providers. Note the intent is to apply the framework for these kinds of decisions, rather than for the routine business of the state.

Engaging stakeholders at these major decision points can boost alignment, coordination and sustainability by:

- Providing decision-makers with the insight and information they need to make sound decisions that remove barriers and advance opportunities for families in diverse communities.
- Promoting the collective understanding, mutual trust, shared direction, and buy-in needed to carry out policies and initiatives successfully and consistently.
- Building momentum and generating support for specific goals and strategies, and the overall early learning direction.

**Calibrating the costs and benefits of stakeholder engagement**

While deep and consistent stakeholder engagement generates big dividends, it also has costs. Costs can include longer timeframes for decisions and implementation, increased staff time, and the need for resources for both the entity requesting the engagement and the people who are asked to offer comment and counsel. In the State and Local Coordination Project's community research and public engagement, some people suggested that the new coordination approach should result in fewer meetings. These comments indicate that local, regional and state players are sensitive to time and cost. Additionally, in some instances, stakeholder input has already informed policies and programs, so there is less need for intensive engagement. All of this suggests that it is useful to identify the circumstances when stakeholder engagement provides enough benefit to balance the cost.

This recommended stakeholder engagement framework can inform state- and regional-level choices about when and how to engage stakeholders based on the:

- Type of decision being considered.
- Information needed to set a course of action that best delivers results for children.
- Extent to which stakeholders will need to understand, share and buy in to the decision.
- Audiences/communities whom the actions will affect and who, therefore, should be engaged in discussion.

**Framework to select the type of stakeholder engagement**

The following two-part framework consists of: (1) three stakeholder-engagement processes with different levels of intensity and reach; and (2) a set of six questions to help agencies determine which process to use. The aim is to find the right balance between process and action. This requires balancing:

- The cost of missing opportunities to identify and adopt best practices and system improvements while removing barriers to service.
- The cost of stretching precious resources even more thinly with the cost of not gathering enough information to act wisely.
- The cost of stretching implementation timelines and resources with the cost of insufficient buy-in and momentum to implement and deliver results for children.

**Types of engagement**

The chart below suggests three types of stakeholder engagement that address balancing these issues. The chart includes examples of the decisions where each type of engagement would be appropriate, and potential stakeholder groups to consider engaging. This stakeholder engagement may be appropriate during implementation of new or expanded policies or programs, as well as during the development phase. This chart is a companion to the *Six Questions for Choosing the Type of Stakeholder Engagement*, which follows.

**Table 6. Types of Stakeholder Engagement**

| Process*   | Sample Types of State Decisions  | Likely Stakeholder Groups*  |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Broad Stakeholder Engagement Process.</b> DEL works collaboratively with ELAC and stakeholders to identify issues, create strategic options, develop draft recommendations, and solicit and incorporate public comments. The process begins at the initial planning stages and continues through development of recommendations. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a workgroup of ELAC members and others to guide the process.</li> <li>• Solicitation and analysis of public comment through state associations and networks, Regional Coalitions and the public, and input from affected stakeholders such as parents and caregivers through community cafes and meetings.</li> <li>• Regular communication about progress, timelines, results and the reasons for decisions.</li> </ul> | <p>Development and future updating of <i>Early Learning Plan</i>, and <i>Early Learning and Development Guidelines</i>.</p>  | <p>Regional Coalitions, parents, child care providers, educators, school administrators, communities of color, social and health services organizations, health care providers, and the public.</p> |
| <p><b>Consultation Process.</b> DEL develops draft proposals and seeks feedback from ELAC and early learning stakeholders on a selection of major strategies, implementation planning for new initiatives or major expansions, and processes to advance the <i>Early Learning Plan</i>. Consultation begins early and continues through development of recommendations. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with ELAC at key milestones to get their advice regarding the process for stakeholder input.</li> <li>• Solicitation and analysis of input from affected stakeholders.</li> <li>• Regular publication of information about progress, the decision and the reasons for that decision</li> </ul>  | <p>Selection of strategies (e.g., creating a developmental screening system); major system-building components (for example, developing performance goals and the accompanying simple continuous quality improvement process); and implementation plans for new or substantially expanded programs (such as planning for grants received).</p> | <p>Same as above or more focused, depending on what input is most useful and from whom.</p>   |

| Process*   | Sample Types of State Decisions   | Likely Stakeholder Groups*   |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Targeted Feedback and Regular Communication Process.</b> DEL develops proposals and keeps ELAC and affected stakeholders informed about proposals and implementation plans, and initiates more targeted outreach to specific populations or stakeholder groups. This process includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular publication of information and communication about the purposes and process.</li> <li>• Targeted requests for feedback and information from stakeholders through occasional conference calls, surveys or meetings.</li> <li>• Communication of the decision and the reasons for the decision.</li> <li>• Occasionally a process could start out as one type of engagement and evolve into a different type of engagement.</li> </ul> | <p>Issues relating to advancing priorities, significant policy changes, implementing new initiatives, scaling, reporting and progress monitoring.</p> | <p>ELAC, Regional Coalitions (could be through ELAC participation), affected service providers and families.</p> |

**Questions to aid in choosing stakeholder engagement**

Responses to the following questions can inform decisions about the type of stakeholder engagement process to use in specific situations.

**Table 7. Six Questions for Choosing the Type of Stakeholder Engagement**

| Ask   | If the Answer is . .  | Consider these Actions  |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>1. Do we need stakeholder buy-in for successful implementation and/or sustainability?</b></p> <p><i>Example: Will large numbers of people need to take concerted action to implement and sustain the Early Learning Plan?</i></p>   | <p>Yes, stakeholder buy-in is needed for successful implementation.</p> | <p>Identify what buy-in and cooperation would lead to success and from whom. Consider moving forward with the “Broad Engagement Process” or the “Consultation Process.”</p>   |
| <p><b>2. Do we have enough information to determine an effective and efficient course of action that will work for the breadth of Washington families, cultures and communities? If not, what additional information do we need and what is the best way to get it?</b></p> <p><i>Example: Parents interviewed for the project said it was hard to find services. Do we know why? Do we know what steps to take to make this easier?</i></p>                                | <p>We need more information.</p>  | <p>Identify the type(s) of information needed and from whom. Consider moving toward the “Broad Stakeholder Engagement Process” with the appropriate stakeholders.</p>   |
| <p><b>3. Do we need more information about how to reach specific groups of the children, families and others that the program is intended to serve?</b></p> <p><i>Example: Are there ethnic, racial or income groups of children who are underrepresented in Early Intervention Programs? If so, do we know how to reach these families and children with developmental screening? Do we know what will work in urban areas, and in rural and frontier communities?</i></p> | <p>We need more information.</p>  | <p>Identify the local, ethnic or provider communities who have experience, relationships, insight and expertise with the local programs, demographics and economy and who can offer ideas to strengthen services, implementation plans, and child outcomes. Consider moving toward the “Consultation Process” with the identified communities and/or providers.</p> |

| Ask   | If the Answer is . .  | Consider these Actions   |
|---|---|--|
| <p>4. Do we know how much local customization will be needed for the action to “work” for the diversity of Washington’s cultures and communities but not result in proliferation of unproven service models?</p> <p><i>Example: Do we know what home visiting programs work well for immigrant families who do not yet speak English?</i></p> | <p>We need to know more.</p>                                      | <p>Identify the type(s) of information needed and from whom. Consider moving toward the “Consultation Process” with the appropriate stakeholders.</p>                |
| <p>5. What staffing and/or other resources can be made available to implement the process?</p>  | <p>Ample.</p> <hr/> <p>Very little.</p>                           | <p>Move toward the “Broad Engagement Process” or the “Consultation Process.”</p> <hr/> <p>Move toward the “Targeted Feedback and Regular Communication Process.”</p> |
| <p>6. How much time is available for the process before a decision is needed?</p>   | <p>Three months or more.</p> <hr/> <p>Less than three months.</p> | <p>Move toward the “Broad Engagement Process” or the “Consultation Process.”</p> <hr/> <p>Move toward the “Targeted Feedback and Regular Communication Process.”</p> |

### Performance Goals Recommendation

One of the barriers identified in the project’s stakeholder interviews was the lack of common measures of program, system and child outcomes that both the state and regions can use to focus actions and improvements. The *Early Learning Plan* Guiding Principles included accountability (“Provide ways to measure progress over time”); and the Steering Committee’s additional principles included promoting the use of data to improve accountability and program quality. The project’s national best practices research found that when state and regional partners agree on a few statewide performance goals, the shared focus and effort can create dramatic improvements in programs, services and systems serving children. In addition, Washington’s new Governor has expressed strong interest in establishing measurable goals for state performance that can be quantified.

Specific, measurable goals can guide and inform all partners’ work, along with agreed-upon measures and data to gauge their progress and drive improvement in the programs’ quality and results. Effective performance goals can:

- Establish mutual aims among diverse partners.
- Measure how successful state and regional partners have been.
- Focus exploration on variations in how organizations are delivering services and achieving results.
- Inform collective actions that partners can take to improve.

***RECOMMENDATION 2: Adopt a handful of performance goals and indicators to help state and regional partners work together, and focus on the same strategic objectives and desired outcomes.***

**Purpose and use of performance goals**

Setting a few, key performance goals will focus the collective efforts of state and regional early learning partners on high-priority actions that implement the state's *Early Learning Plan*. Setting these goals involves three elements:

- Each *performance goal* sets a specific objective or target for: the quality of services that should be available to children and families across the state; or a system improvement; or the desired outcomes for children.
- An *indicator* is the way to measure progress toward meeting the performance goal.
- *Quality improvement* is the process of using information and data to explore what is working well and what needs to be strengthened, and to make changes that will improve progress, quality or outcomes.

North Carolina provides an example of successfully using performance goals. Several years ago they set a performance goal to ensure that at least 75 percent of all children with special needs in every county—and who receive subsidies or other assistance—are enrolled in high-quality 4- or 5-star rated child care programs. As a result of focused, collective, local and state efforts, 94 percent of those children are now in high-quality care settings.

Following this example, it is recommended that state and regional partners agree on a handful of performance goals focused on: the quality, cultural competence and effectiveness of services; advancing important system improvements; or directly boosting results for children. The state and regional partners should use the performance goals and indicators to:

- Monitor statewide and regional progress toward the goals.
- Understand and consider the unique perspectives, experiences and requirements of children and families in geographic, racial and socio-economic communities across the state.
- Build toward equitable access and outcomes for children by enhancing state and regional capacity (including financial resources) for continuous quality improvement.
- Help the state and regions understand and continually improve their progress toward achieving equitable opportunities and outcomes for young children and their families.

**How would it work?**

The performance goals and indicators could focus greater state and regional attention on existing goals or targets (such as participation in Early Achievers, or the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers programs) or on new or revised goals.

For areas where there are regional disparities of resources and capacity, state and regional partners should consider tailoring targets to help each region make ambitious, but achievable progress toward the goal. The performance goals should also be consistent with other processes that establish state early learning priorities. For example, the performance goals should be consistent with the Washington Early

Learning Partnership annual priorities. The implementation plan for this recommendation describes the process for state and regional partners to work together to select performance goals.

Of note, the cultural competency review that was part of this State and Local Coordination Project provided several useful and important suggestions for creating performance goals that should be considered in selecting and using the goals:

- Because creating universal goals can reproduce historic inequities and poor outcomes, the state and regional partners should explicitly define success to include “ensuring that each identified demographic within the state is achieving at the level identified in the goal.”
- Since helping all children to be ready and successful is our aim, data should be shared that is disaggregated by race and other demographics so as “to describe differences in access, experience and outcomes based on race, culture, language, income and region, and to begin to make the case for” changes to achieve this aim.

**Criteria for selecting performance goals and indicators.** The performance goals and indicators should meet the following criteria:

- Advance the *Early Learning Plan* and make important contributions to improving: systems, equitable access to high-quality services, and results for children, including racial equity.
- Set the desired measurable result or objective to be achieved.
- Have sufficient associated data, currently available, that can be disaggregated by race and family income, and gathered periodically to enable monitoring of state and regional progress, and to inform quality improvement.
- Require both state and regional action.
- Be accompanied by the capacity and technical assistance to enable progress monitoring and quality improvement of state and regional efforts.

**Examples of possible performance goals.** The box below demonstrates what a performance goal for the Washington’s Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program (ESIT) might look like, if the state and regional partners were to choose that program as an important effort for joint action.

Other examples of possible performance goals could be:

- X number or percent (to be determined in the goal-setting process) of infants and toddlers will receive developmental screening by Y (a certain date) (advances *Early Learning Plan Strategy #6*).
- All 10 Regional Coalitions will have in place governance documents that articulate the coalition’s purpose and minimum operating procedures (advances *Early Learning Plan Strategy #34*).

### Performance Goal Example

- **ESIT target/performance goal.** The rate of identifying Washington's infants under the age of 12 months needing early intervention services and determined eligible should be 1.2 percent of children under 1 year of age. This compares to the current rate of 0.75 percent, as of December 1, 2012. (An alternative would be to set the goal of identifying infants *and* toddlers from birth to 36 months needing early intervention services and determined eligible at 2.5 percent of all children under 3 years of age. This compares to the current rate of 2.3 percent as of December 1, 2013.)
- **Why is the goal important? Does it advance the Early Learning Plan?** Early intervention can change the trajectory of a child's life for the better. ESIT underpins *Early Learning Plan* Strategy # 7 (Add at-risk children to early intervention services).
- **Are there state and regional data that can serve as an indicator?** Yes. The percentage of children from birth to 1 year identified and determined eligible for early intervention services is disaggregated/reported at the county/region and state levels (per Karen Walker, DEL Early Intervention Program Administrator).
- **Is joint state and regional action needed to help achieve the goal?** DEL and its ESIT program, together with the State and Local Interagency Coordinating Council, could invite representatives from Regional Coalitions, Infant and Toddler Regional Steering Committees, parents, parenting education, home visiting programs, and/or Child Care Aware to help increase the awareness of parents, early learning networks and professionals about the signs of developmental delay and the need for regular developmental screening. Moreover, since regional organizations attempt to reach parents, the improved outreach, referral and service provision will require the creativity and effort of those nearest to families.
- **Quality improvement process.** State and Local Interagency Coordinating Councils and others they invite to participate would examine their data and explore such questions as: Why do we think more children are not identified (for example, parents are not aware)? Why are not more children determined eligible? Are there disproportionalities by race and income? What actions can we take? What can we do differently to better achieve this goal?

#### How are performance goals different from other current measures?

The Washington State Department of Early Learning already works diligently to respond to a variety of measures, goals and metrics established by the Governor, Legislature, program grants and other sources. These other reporting measures include: the Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) goals for state agencies; the Washington Early Learning Partnership annual priorities; the Race to the Top grant goals; and the *Early Learning Plan* indicators. However, as Appendix O describes in more detail, most of these other measures either focus solely on state agency performance, or do not provide specific measures that can serve as the focus for joint state and regional efforts.

## Recommendations for Coordination at Each System Level

This section contains the recommendations to improve coordination and communication at each level of the early learning system: (1) state agency to state agency; (2) state and regional; and (3) coordination within each region. The recommendations call for enhancements to three existing entities: The Washington Early Learning Partnership, the Early Learning Advisory Council and the Early Learning Regional Coalitions.

Improving the state and local coordination system is similar to a jigsaw puzzle in that many of the individual decisions impact how well the system will work as a whole. The table on the next page (“State and Local Early Learning Coordination Structure”) provides an overview of the three entities that will form the backbone of the improved state and local coordination structure. It shows how the proposed recommendations will enhance how the three entities work together.

The improvement of early learning systems accelerates with clearly defined functions, or roles, and well-defined relationships among the coordinating bodies. This is because the functions of the state, state-to-regional and regional coordination are interconnected. For example, the Regional Coalitions can help the state understand what is working well and what is not in local communities. This would give state agencies the information they need to make state policies and programs more effective for children and families.

The functions of each level of the system can be thought of as a job description. Much like the different jobs in a business, such as product design, manufacturing, sales and shipping, each is related to the other.

The next table (“Recommended State, ELAC and Regional Roles in the Early Learning System Functions”) shows the recommended “job descriptions” for the state, state-regional and regional coordination for each of the six functions of an effective early learning system and how each relates to the others. The recommendations include functions that are already being performed and recommended enhancements.

**Table 8. State and Local Early Learning Coordination Structure**

|   | State Agency-State Agency  | State-Regional   | Regional  |
|---|--|--|---|
|   | Early Learning Partnership (WELP)  | Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)   | Early Learning Regional Coalitions  |
| <b>Recommended Structure</b>                  | Interagency partnership of state agencies that fund or set policy for early learning. (No change to agencies' decision-making authority.)  | Council of nongovernmental and state agency representatives that provides advice and recommendations to DEL and on issues of common interest, and as agreed, the WA Early Learning Partnership Agencies.   | 10 Early Learning Regional Coalitions using current coalition boundaries.   |
| <b>Recommended Membership</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Five state-level agencies</u> that fund and/or set early learning policy: DEL, DOH, DSHS, OSPI and Thrive. (DOH and DSHS will be invited to join the current membership.)</li> <li>• <u>Leaders and directors</u> of these agencies, as appropriate for the work.</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Membership</u>: 35 members (add representatives from 10 Regional Coalitions, the Early Learning Action Alliance, Child Care Aware and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems, and more connections to statewide associations and networks).</li> <li>• <u>Two co-chairs</u>: one state agency member and one non-governmental member to be elected by ELAC for a two-year term.</li> <li>• <u>Executive Committee</u> of the two co-chairs and two to three ELAC members (preferably chairs of ELAC working committees).</li> <li>• <u>Working Committees</u> will be established to carry out the ELAC Work Plan.</li> <li>• <u>Designated liaisons</u> to other ongoing committees, such as the Interagency Coordinating Committee (list to be identified in the ELAC workplan).</li> </ul> | <p><u>Membership</u>: To be determined by each Regional Coalition, using guidance to encourage a mix of diverse individuals who, together, can reflect the diverse interests of the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders and representatives from each early learning field/sub-system and constituency (for example, communities of color, business) who can make and influence decisions.</li> <li>• Champions and opinion leaders from government, education, business, philanthropy and the media.</li> <li>• Professionals, volunteers and families who represent regional geographic, ethnic and racial diversity.</li> <li>• People who provide or have access to needed skills and capacities.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Recommended Guiding Agreements</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Memorandum of Understanding to include additional state agencies.</li> <li>• Early Learning Plan.</li> <li>• Annual priorities.</li> <li>• Clear agreements about lead agency and partner roles on each issue.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELAC Charter.</li> <li>• Member Job Description and Roles with shared commitments.</li> <li>• Early Learning Plan.</li> <li>• ELAC Work Plan.</li> <li>• Committee Charters (purposes, timeline, etc.).</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance document with purposes and minimum operating structure.</li> <li>• Decision-making and communication processes.</li> <li>• Early Learning Plan.</li> <li>• Clear regional plan and goals.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Recommended Coordination Relationships</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to strengthen the connection between state agency leaders for each early learning sub-system.</li> <li>• Work together to increase alignment, and reduce "silos" of state programs.</li> <li>• Draw on advice from ELAC and experience of regional representatives.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend state goals, strategies and policies.</li> <li>• Serve as a forum for regional/state system-building discussions.</li> <li>• Provide avenue for state leaders and Council members to understand regional issues, and demographic and economic shifts.</li> <li>• Provide avenue for regional leaders and Council members to understand state agency aims and issues.</li> <li>• Promote joint action among all partners.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage local stakeholders, communities and families.</li> <li>• Provide a voice for regional interests and concerns, offering comments on state goals, strategies and policies.</li> <li>• Participate in ELAC (one representative from each coalition).</li> </ul>  |

**Table 9. Recommended State, ELAC and Regional Roles in the Early Learning System Functions**

| Functions  | State Level Agencies   | ELAC   | Regional Coalitions   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Crosscutting Function:</b></p> <p><b>Build Relationships; Consider Stakeholder input</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create/maintain collaborative working relationships across sectors and agencies.</li> <li>• Gather and consider advice/input from ELAC and stakeholders to inform decisions in meaningful ways.</li> <li>• Gather and consider statewide and regional/ local data and needs to inform decisions about how to boost results for children.</li> <li>• Communicate decisions and reasons for decisions.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise on stakeholder engagement processes.</li> <li>• Consider stakeholder input in developing recommendations and giving advice to DEL.</li> <li>• Communicate state-level information, priorities and issues back to communities and constituencies.</li> <li>• Serve as a forum to ensure mutual understanding of state and regional needs, emerging issues, innovations and system building.</li> <li>• Promote joint action among cross-sector partners.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build relationships with communities of color and low-income communities so that the interests of all children are well-represented.</li> <li>• Involve stakeholders from each of the early learning fields.</li> <li>• Engage communities &amp; stakeholders in setting regional priorities.</li> <li>• Bring community voice grounded in understanding of regional experience and demographic/economic shifts to providing advice on state decisions.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>1. Set Standards, Goals and Outcomes</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review data, best practices, and state/ regional successes and gaps.</li> <li>• Set and revise performance goals, outcomes and accountability measures in consultation with ELAC.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider data, best practices, and state/ regional successes and gaps in developing recommendations.</li> <li>• Make recommendations for key standards, performance goals and outcomes.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather, analyze and share successes and experience, regional gaps and needs, and proven and promising practices.</li> <li>• Set regional goals and outcomes.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>2. Choose Strategies and Priorities</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set annual priorities in consultation with ELAC.</li> <li>• Determine state funded services/ programs.</li> <li>• Establish guidelines for tailoring programs to meet local needs, as appropriate.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote mutual understanding of state and regional issues, needs and opportunities.</li> <li>• Advise /make recommendations on key issues, initiatives and system building.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set regional priorities and Action Agenda; tailor programs to meet local needs.</li> <li>• Suggest innovations, "promising approaches" and examples of solutions to streamline/ integrate services for state consideration.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>3. Ensure Funding and Policy Support</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure state, federal and private funds to implement statewide early learning strategies.</li> <li>• Implement policy/funding support for expansion/ enhancement of high-quality supports &amp; services that can boost results for children</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise and make recommendations on key issues, initiatives and system building.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify &amp; share "enhancements" needed to meet state/regional outcomes.</li> <li>• Analyze system/ service funding; identify gaps/efficiencies.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>4. Implement and Expand Services and Programs</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and understand the needs and capacity of state and regional service delivery systems.</li> <li>• Remove barriers to quality, effectiveness, efficiency and maximum child outcomes.</li> <li>• Decide on phasing, targets and infrastructure to support scaling of systems and services.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise and make recommendations on key issues, initiatives and system building.</li> <li>• Raise and/or advise on emerging issues.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage local/regional stakeholders to identify obstacles/ solutions to promote alignment, efficiency and expansion of effective, high-quality services.</li> <li>• Analyze and share needs with regional and state partners.</li> <li>• Advance state priorities. Select and implement regional services, supports and system building.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>5. Build Public Understanding and Public Will</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate state goals, outcomes and "what it will take."</li> <li>• to get there to regional coalitions and to advocates.</li> <li>• Educate public and cultivate champions using data to show</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Champion early learning, state goals and outcomes, and "what it will take" to get there in member spheres of influence.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate diverse champions, use data to show value, communicate regional goals and "what it will take" to get there.</li> </ul>   |

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>6. Be Accountable for Achieving Outcomes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Set framework for state/regional outcomes and quality improvement processes that illuminates/addresses inequities.</li><li>•Manage data systems and report progress.</li><li>•Provide technical assistance for professionals and partners</li><li>•Monitor grantees; manage and account for funds.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Advise on framework for state/regional outcomes.</li><li>•Advise and make recommendations on key issues, initiatives and system building.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Implement regional/local quality improvement processes and reporting.</li><li>•Engage local/regional stakeholders in reviewing services and programs, and identifying refinements to improve outcomes and reduce inequities.</li><li>•Manage and account for funds and report regional results.</li></ul> |
|---|---|--|--|

## State-Level Coordination: Washington Early Learning Partnership Recommendations

The *Washington State Early Learning Plan*:

[E]ncourages breaking down the barriers of traditional silos based on children’s narrow age ranges, old funding patterns, different types of development (i.e., physical, mental, social-emotional, etc.), and the historic distinctions between a child’s first five years and the school years. (p. 4)

The plan takes a comprehensive view of the state’s early learning system. This “system” is composed of:

“the various policies, programs and services for young children, and for the adults who care for and teach them. When these elements each work well *and* align with the other elements, children will have the best opportunity to reach their full potential.” (p. 51)

The *Early Learning Plan* recognizes that early learning takes place in many locations and is carried out by many people and organizations, with services in several disciplines that support children and families.

### Work of the Washington Early Learning Partnership

Since 2006 when the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and Thrive by Five Washington (Thrive) were established, they have worked together to support high-quality early learning opportunities for all

*“Do the policy work needed to rethink the system to align funds, policy and service delivery, and reduce duplication.”*

From stakeholder interviews

children in Washington. They also began to collaborate with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), recognizing that early learning continues and needs to be aligned through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. In August 2009 DEL, OSPI and Thrive created the Washington Early Learning Partnership to work in collaboration on behalf of young children and

families in Washington. The three entities signed a voluntary resolution to formalize that relationship and commit to “develop a strong, comprehensive early learning system for all children in Washington State, birth to age 8” (*Early Learning Partnership Joint Resolution*, 2009). See Appendix P.

The *Joint Resolution* commits the parties to link together and, with the input of community stakeholders, to advance early learning in Washington by developing “an aligned statewide early learning system.” The partnership members agreed to come together on policy, funding and program decisions that will build a comprehensive system of services and supports for children and families, prenatal through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Since signing the *Joint Resolution*, the partnership has met monthly on a variety of projects. These have included creating the state’s first early learning strategic plan (*Early Learning Plan*), drafting the state’s revised *Early Learning and Development Guidelines*, implementing the WaKIDS recommendations, and numerous other projects. At times the partners have been able to engage a diverse and broad range of interested parties in developing recommendations, resulting in increased support for policy changes. They have also joined forces to advocate for state policies that benefit children and families (for example, funding for full-day kindergarten).

In the *Joint Resolution*, the partners agree to work collaboratively to identify priority actions, lead agencies and key steps to build a world-class early learning system in Washington. The partnership has

developed annual *Early Learning Partnership Priority Strategies*, which describe the actions to accomplish each priority, a schedule to complete the work, and the lead and shared responsibilities for each priority. At the end of each year the partnership reports on accomplishments for each of the annual priority strategies.

The partnership has also worked to improve communication with stakeholders about early learning activities. Leaders for each of the members have made numerous joint appearances before the Legislature, early learning forums and stakeholder groups to discuss the importance, value and accomplishments of the partnership. Staff members have worked diligently to coordinate communications, issuing joint reports and news releases.

#### **Expanding cross-sector work**

In the project's stakeholder interviews, many stakeholders said the partnership was effective, especially in raising awareness about the importance of early learning. A theme among the ideas to improve coordination was doing more cross-sector work and coordinating at the decision-making level. A number of interviewees and Steering Committee members suggested involving other agencies in the partnership, with the state Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) mentioned most often. One of the key lessons learned from the best practices research was the need for effective state-level coordination across all state agencies that manage significant parts of the early learning system. The project's community outreach also identified adding DOH and DSHS as an opportunity to strengthen Washington's early learning system.

#### ***RECOMMENDATION 3. Invite the Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to participate in the Washington Early Learning Partnership with DEL, OSPI and Thrive.***

The Washington State Early Learning Partnership has made an excellent start at aligning goals, strategies and standards. DEL, OSPI and Thrive have begun to break down some of the traditional silos, focusing on desired outcomes for children and families. But many early learning services and family supports are administered by two other agencies who are not currently participating in the partnership: the Department of Health and the Department of Social and Health Services.

DOH provides, or collaborates in, a number of essential services for children and families. For example, DOH is the state lead agency for Title V Maternal and Child Health block grant program. The DOH Office of Nutrition Services manages the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program, the WIC breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed). The department also manages the Child Profile program for health promotion and disease prevention for infants, children and adolescents, and operates the state immunization registry. DOH provides lead policy and planning for prenatal care, runs a newborn screening program, has a Children with Special Health Care Needs program, is carrying out grant-funded programs related to unmet health needs and childhood obesity, and is working with DEL and other partners to create a statewide, universal, developmental screening system for young children. They also collaborate with DEL and Thrive on home visiting services, providing community needs assessment data and data analytic support to help inform key system and funding decisions. Their programs and services are an integral part of the state's early learning system.

DSHS is the lead state agency for child welfare programs, serving vulnerable and at-risk children and families. DSHS also operates the Working Connections Child Care and Seasonal Child Care programs that provide child care subsidies for working parents who qualify for the benefits. DSHS Community Service Offices help families connect with Apple Health for Kids, the First Steps maternity and infant care program, and emergency food and cash assistance programs. DSHS also operates the Washington Connection website, which enables residents to find out if they are eligible for many programs and apply online. DSHS licenses and supplies training for foster parents, and offers training for kinship caregivers. The agency also provides programs to prevent child abuse and abandonment and offers information about child safety.

The work of the Washington Early Learning Partnership would be enhanced by adding these two departments to the partnership. In this way the state can continue the good work begun by DEL, OSPI and Thrive to align programs and services, coordinate across disciplines, break down traditional silos, and strengthen the focus on improving outcomes for children and families. Public comments in Round 2 of the project's public engagement widely supported expanding the partnership.

The *Joint Resolution*, which created the partnership, states that staff from each agency should participate in the Washington Early Learning Partnership to "support development and assure alignment of each priority area with programs and resources." The current three-member partnership includes the Director of DEL, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Chief Executive Officer of Thrive, and senior staff from each agency/ organization.

The Secretaries of DOH and DSHS should become members of the partnership. However, they might not be able to attend all partnership meetings. The mission and scope of services these two departments provide is quite broad and diverse. Their early learning programs, while integral to the early learning system, represent a relatively small fraction of the programs and services that each of these two departments provides. At a minimum, the Secretaries from DOH and DSHS should participate in setting the partnership's collective annual priority strategies, and attend other partnership meetings periodically as agenda items and decisions dictate.

The Division or program managers from DOH and DSHS who oversee key early learning services, are knowledgeable about department priorities and resources, and can speak on behalf of the department, should regularly participate in partnership meetings.

***RECOMMENDATION 4. Continue to create annual priority strategies, and develop a process for consultation with ELAC and Regional Coalitions.***

As mentioned above, the Washington Early Learning Partnership adopts, works together on, and jointly reports on annual *Partnership Priority Strategies*. The annual priorities advance strategies consistent with the state *Early Learning Plan*, and reflect those actions that at least two of the three partners will work on together. The partnership's annual priorities do not include other strategies that DEL, OSPI or Thrive are working on independently.

The partnership should continue to build on the good work that DEL, OSPI and Thrive have initiated, and engage ELAC (including representatives of the Regional Coalitions, see Recommendation #8) in discussing the annual priority strategies before finalizing them. The purposes would be to help foster a culture and practice of two-way communication between state and regional partners, and build

awareness and momentum for the annual priorities. As part of this annual process, partnership group agencies could identify areas of common interest upon which they will jointly seek strategic advice from ELAC. Discussions about the annual priority strategies would help inform ELAC and the Regional Coalitions about the proposed partnership priorities so they could align their activities at the regional level with state priorities. At the same time, these discussions would give state agencies an opportunity to: hear of regional approaches that might be broadly adopted; gain regional perspective on the importance of issues and activities; or identify potential challenges or opportunities related to implementation before proceeding. This communication could influence the partnership's decisions about their annual priorities.

Engaging ELAC and Regional Coalitions in the process of setting annual priorities can strengthen the connection between state and regional early learning partners. It will also address a key barrier identified by early learning stakeholders: "There is not enough two-way communication and planning among the state and local communities."

In addition, as part of the discussion of annual priorities, the partnership should consider a method for reviewing progress on achieving the state's *Early Learning Plan* strategies and outcomes, and the timing of that review. (The 10-year plan was adopted in 2010.) The partnership's annual priorities focus on the individual strategies in the plan, but there has not been a review of overall progress toward meeting the ELP outcomes, or consideration of the need to modify the plan in any manner. Once the partnership considers an approach to periodic review of the plan, they should discuss the approach and the timing with ELAC (including representatives from the Regional Coalitions). This would support ELAC's ability to consider the full range of early learning programs and services in its deliberations.

***RECOMMENDATION 5. Continue to enhance the communication among Washington Early Learning Partnership members and regional early learning partners. Create a calendar of current and upcoming state-level initiatives and actions that will have a significant impact on local stakeholders.***

As mentioned above, the three members of the current Washington Early Learning Partnership have done an excellent job of coordinating communication among early learning stakeholders about joint initiatives. The three organizations have used their collective communications tools (such as websites, newsletters and public appearances) to keep interested parties informed, and provide consistent messaging about the importance of advancing the *Early Learning Plan* strategies.

However, during the public engagement for this project, early learning stakeholders mentioned several communications challenges that the Steering Committee attempts to address through other recommendations in this report (such as expanding ELAC's membership to include representation of the Regional Coalitions, see Recommendation #8). In addition, members of the Steering Committee said that given the high volume of information flowing from the state (about programs, policy changes, funding opportunities or requirements, advocacy interests, etc.), it is sometimes difficult to see how the various pieces fit together. They also said that at times Regional Coalitions are surprised, and even overwhelmed, by multiple requests for local comment and multiple initiatives. Not having a good sense of the schedule of current and anticipated future activities that may affect local communities and early learning stakeholders makes it challenging for them to plan.

To address this communication challenge, the partnership agencies should discuss the timing of state-level initiatives, and develop a coordinated schedule of current and upcoming activities that would have a significant affect on the members of the Regional Coalitions. The schedule could be posted on the DEL website and updated periodically. The other partnership agencies, Regional Coalitions and others could publicize and link to this calendar. This would help regional partners understand the range of program and policy issues they are currently being asked to address, as well as upcoming actions.

### ***State-Regional Coordination: Early Learning Advisory Council Recommendations***

The Legislature established the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) in 2007 to advise the Department of Early Learning on developing a comprehensive and coordinated statewide system of early care, education, supports and services. Today it fulfills that role by providing advice to DEL and, on request, to the Washington Early Learning Partnership. In its first five years, ELAC has worked with DEL, state agencies, and hundreds of early learning professionals and parents to put forth recommendations for key system-building elements, such as our state's 10-year *Early Learning Plan* and the *Early Learning and Development Guidelines*.

Through the State and Local Early Learning Coordination Project, Washington has examined how it can take the next big step in realizing the *Early Learning Plan's* vision. Achieving this vision will require joint goal setting and collective action across sectors and among state and regional system partners. North Carolina and other states with strong state and local collaborative leadership and accountability systems are seeing impressive results. For example, North Carolina's Governor Beverly Perdue points to the state's early childhood focus and collaborative work at the state and local levels as the reason for significant improvements in North Carolina's end-of-grade test scores.

Washington enjoys a strong Department of Early Learning, a productive Washington Early Learning Partnership, and a burgeoning network of Regional Coalitions. But there is not yet an intentional and meaningful two-way connection between the state (DEL and its sister state agencies) and the Regional Coalitions, local communities and statewide associations who are each working in their own way to improve early learning. In the project's research, many early learning stakeholders expressed this sentiment and identified several barriers to services for children and families. These barriers included: "not enough two-way communication and planning between the state and local communities" and "no common measures of program, system and child outcomes that both the state and local communities use to show value and focus improvements."

ELAC has many of the ingredients needed to become the place, or "table," where the right people from DEL, other state agencies, Regional Coalitions, and representatives of statewide networks of parents and educators can work together to strengthen the coordination of services, systems and results for children. Strengthening ELAC follows from the project's Steering Committee's principles to foster "high performing state and local partnerships that work together to improve results." In addition, the *Advancing Racial Equity Theory of Change* outcome map notes that ELAC is one of the existing formal pathways for the voice and influence of those furthest from opportunity.

The following recommendations call for the ELAC to serve a more focused and active function in enhancing state and local communication, and promoting joint action among early learning partners.

***RECOMMENDATION 6. Strengthen ELAC’s advisory function in the early learning system by making it a forum for state and regional partners to: (a) share information and plan improvements; (b) inform decisions in meaningful ways; and (c) promote joint actions that cross-sector partners can take to improve services and results for our state’s rich diversity of children and families.***

#### **ELAC functions**

The Legislature established ELAC to advise DEL on statewide early learning issues.<sup>4</sup> Strengthening ELAC’s advisory function in the ways recommended will require having the right people at the table and authentic two-way information-sharing that is used to inform substantive decisions in meaningful ways. This combination will help all the partners continually improve the services, supports and set priorities that will best support the development and learning of our state’s rich diversity of children and families (for more on ELAC’s membership, see Recommendation #8, below.) Jointly focusing on a handful of statewide early-learning performance goals and a continuous quality improvement process (see Recommendation #2, above) will further help ELAC identify how to do even better for children and families.

The ultimate success of ELAC’s ability to fulfill this new function will depend upon all involved working together to help ELAC to:

- Become a forum for meaningful deliberation and influence on important decisions.
- Engage members who are connected to statewide networks and Regional Coalitions, and who are active two-way communicators to bring the perspectives of their communities and constituencies to the state, and communicate state priorities to their constituents.
- Create joint statewide goals that provide the opportunity for the state and local communities to work together to improve services, systems and results for children.

#### **Member roles and responsibilities**

Carrying out this enhanced function will require ELAC members to play new and more specific roles. These new roles elaborate on those described in the state authorizing language and the *Head Start Act of 2007* (see Appendix B). These roles also aim to make staffing and participating in ELAC a high value contribution: to DEL, to members of the Washington Early Learning Partnership, to the Regional Coalitions, to ELAC members and their constituencies, and ultimately to children and families across Washington.

The initial transition and sequencing from the current roles to new roles will be considered in the Project Implementation Plan. It is intended that ELAC will create a work plan. Setting this work plan will provide a

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<sup>4</sup> From Washington authorizing legislation (RCW 43.215.090): (1) The early learning advisory council is established to advise the department on statewide early learning issues that would build a comprehensive system of quality early learning programs and services for Washington’s children and families by assessing needs and the availability of services, aligning resources, developing plans for data collection and professional development of early childhood educators, and establishing key performance measures. (2) The council shall work in conjunction with the department to develop a statewide early learning plan that guides the department in promoting alignment of private and public sector actions, objectives, and resources, and ensuring school readiness.

regular opportunity to consider what work is the most important, and what capacity is needed and available to ELAC's work. It is not intended that ELAC would take on each of these roles simultaneously.

ELAC members' roles may include the following:

1. Review and advise on updating the *Washington State Early Learning Plan*, which guides work to promote alignment of private and public sector actions, objectives, and resources to ensure the optimal development and learning of children from prenatal through 3rd grade.
2. Recommend Early Learning Performance Goals, measures, and a method for monitoring progress and continuous quality improvement and annual priorities.
3. Recommend methods for improving state and local coordination of early learning care, education, supports and services.
4. Assess needs and the availability of services.
5. Provide an avenue for state leaders to understand regional issues, and for regional leaders to understand and promote state aims.
6. Recommend strategies to align resources, supports and services from prenatal care to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
7. Recommend methods to improve and streamline the access of families to early learning care, education, supports and services provided by DEL, DOH, DSHS and OSPI.
8. Develop recommendations on plans for data collection and professional development of early learning educators.
9. Develop recommendations to DEL for the Governor and Legislature on major system improvements, or as requested by the director of DEL, partnership group agencies if, and as, agreed, the Governor and/ or the Legislature (as was done in the Birth-to-Three Subcommittee legislation).
10. Raise public awareness about the critical importance and benefits of high quality early learning for *all* children, and about state and regional early learning plans efforts.
11. Develop, implement and review an ELAC work plan, mutually agreed upon by the members, the Department of Early Learning and other state agencies seeking ELAC's advice.
12. Identify and promote joint action that all partners can take to strengthen services, reduce disparities and improve results for children and families.

While ELAC's authorizing language would allow these roles, in the future, the legislation should be revised to further specify the functions. As was noted in the State and Local Coordination Project's best practices research: "Systems integration is tough work and can take years. Institutionalizing governance structures in statute with mandated purposes, participation and authorities fosters durable systems that are less dependent on individual leaders" (Arizona early learning leader interviewed for this project).

**RECOMMENDATION 7. Clarify how ELAC will carry out these more focused functions by: (a) developing guiding documents that describe ELAC’s structure, charter, ground rules, and members’ roles and responsibilities; (b) developing an annual ELAC work plan; and (c) instituting these functions and processes.**

Carrying out these new functions will require clarity of purpose, roles, responsibilities, and operating processes so that ELAC and the entities to which it is connected can work together effectively and efficiently. For this reason, there should be a set of guiding documents that reflect ELAC’s strengthened functions, and an orientation process for new members.

#### **Guiding documents and a new member orientation process**

ELAC should have three guiding documents: a *charter*, a statement of member roles and responsibilities, and a work plan. In addition, a process for orienting new members should be developed.

1. **ELAC Charter.** The charter should articulate ELAC’s purposes, roles, committee structures, decision-making and operating processes; and a periodic evaluation process for assessing and identifying ways to improve ELAC’s effectiveness. The charter will help ELAC members work together effectively, and make ELAC’s work clear to other early learning and education partners across the state. Recommendations for key new items to include in the *Charter* include the following.
  - A. **ELAC committees.** ELAC should establish an Executive Committee and a manageable number of committees (as needed) to carry out its work. In general, committees should be ad hoc and focused on a specific purpose, such as the committees that developed the *Early Learning Plan* and the *Early Learning and Development Guidelines*. However, standing committees should also be considered as needed. Non-ELAC members shall be invited to join the ad hoc and/or standing committees as appropriate.
    - **The Executive Committee (Standing Committee)** should have the following roles: (1) monitor overall progress of the work plan; (2) plan ELAC meetings and work with DEL staff to set agendas; (3) make committee assignments for tasks that span multiple committees; (4) stay abreast of and navigate emerging issues; and (5) act on behalf of ELAC on agreed-upon time sensitive decisions. The Executive Committee should be composed of four to five members, including the ELAC Co-chairs. A Regional Coalition member should be on the Executive Committee.
    - **Birth- to-Three Committee.** Establishing this committee was one of the recommendations in the *2012 Birth to Three Subcommittee Report*,<sup>5</sup> which recommended investments in birth-to-three services for 2013 through 2015. The report identified the following potential roles for the committee: (1) to provide focus and advice on the continued progress of birth-to-three services and systems development, with a specific focus on the accessibility and quality of services for infants, toddlers and their families; and (2) to promote the coordination and accessibility of services to vulnerable children and families. A decision is pending on whether it will be a standing or an ad hoc committee.

<sup>5</sup> Washington State Birth to 3 Subcommittee Recommendations, December 2012.  
[http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/research/docs/B3\\_recommendations\\_2013-15.pdf](http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/research/docs/B3_recommendations_2013-15.pdf)  
 Washington Early Learning State and Local Coordination Project (2013)

- **Ad Hoc Committees** can be determined, as needed, when developing the work plan. Such committees would provide recommendations and advice, as charged by a Committee Charter, to carry out the ELAC work plan. The practice of including ELAC members and others who are not ELAC members should be continued. Doing so will allow ELAC to benefit from specialized expertise and provide the opportunity to engage stakeholders. DEL should appoint the chairperson of each ad hoc committee. However, where one or more other agencies request advice, that agency or agencies should designate the chairperson.
- B. **Liaisons between ELAC and related initiatives and committees** should be established (as needed) to provide a voice for ELAC in other policy tables and a feedback loop between ELAC and these related efforts (such as the State Interagency Coordinating Council for early intervention, Universal Developmental Screening Partnership, Quality Education Council, or the *Ready and Successful Schools PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Action Plan Workgroup*). Liaisons would allow ELAC to stay abreast of the plans, issues and opportunities being considered that could inform ELAC's work, and where ELAC's voice could inform the work of other policy tables and initiatives. A schematic of related policy tables and initiatives should be developed and reviewed periodically to determine where ELAC liaisons and advice are needed.
- C. **ELAC meetings** should be held as needed to carry out the Council's work. ELAC should have six four- to six-hour regular meetings per year. As needed, additional special meetings could be scheduled to carry out ELAC's work. ELAC should have alternative ways of holding these meetings that do not require members to travel, including video conferencing. Committees should meet in the months between full ELAC meetings and more frequently as needed to complete their work. To facilitate collaboration and system building, there should be an opportunity for members and Early Learning Partnership agencies to suggest agenda items to the Executive Committee.
- D. **Improved communication between meetings** should be instituted. To be effective, ELAC members need to stay abreast of developments that relate to its work. The pace of policy deliberations and initiatives related to children and families from prenatal to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is far too rapid to rely solely on updates at meetings. In-between meeting communication could take the form of regular e-mails with periodic conference calls or Webinars for more complex topics.
2. **Member Roles and Responsibilities.** ELAC should have written roles and responsibilities for its members and leaders. This will enable members to transition to the new roles and provide clarity for others who work with ELAC. Examples that arose during the project's discussions include a shared commitment to: (a) focus on results for *all* children and families; (b) reduce the opportunity gaps experienced by our state's most vulnerable children; (c) represent the perspectives of constituencies and sectors rather than individual member and organizational interests; (d) work together to promote alignment of private and public sector actions, objectives and resources; and (e) develop a comprehensive and coordinated statewide system of care, education, supports and services. In addition, ELAC ground rules should be established and included in the member Roles and Responsibilities.

3. **Work Plan.** An ELAC *Work Plan* would provide an opportunity to discuss and agree on the most important issues for ELAC's work. This will enable timely, focused deliberation and identification of how partners can work together across the system. ELAC and DEL should mutually agree upon the *ELAC Work Plan*. If other state agencies seek ELAC's advice, they should approve the relevant sections of the *Work Plan*.
4. **New Member Orientation Process.** To prepare incoming members to play active and effective roles, an orientation process should be developed. The orientation process should include: (1) an initial meeting or meetings with ELAC staff, agency leaders, and ELAC co-chairs; (2) an ELAC Member Handbook; and (3) connection to a member mentor who can answer questions and facilitate a smooth onboarding through the first two to four meetings.

The purposes and elements of the ELAC Member Handbook should be:

- **Know the people** — List of all ELAC members, their terms of office, their contact information and affiliations; and a list of key agency staff.
- **Know how ELAC operates** — ELAC Charter, Member Roles and Responsibilities, Committee charters and members, number and types of meetings, Agency/member communication protocols, ELAC connections and liaisons to other key initiatives and committees.
- **Know the work** — The State *Early Learning Plan*, ELAC Work Plan, Partnership Group Priorities, State and Local Coordination Structure, Roles and Functions, Stakeholder Engagement Protocols, Performance Goals, meeting summaries from the past year, and briefing documents for key work items.

***RECOMMENDATION 8. Expand ELAC membership to include representation of each Regional Coalition and deepen connections to statewide associations representing key early learning fields.***

**Early Learning Advisory Council composition**

Serving as a forum for system building and promoting joint state and regional action requires that people with the right experience, expertise, relationships and level of influence be at the table. To extend ELAC's reach and import, ELAC members should be:

- Affiliated with statewide networks/associations of parents and professionals, and to the Regional Coalitions to the fullest extent possible.
- Individuals who make or influence decisions in their field or community and are well respected by their peers and colleagues.
- Individuals who are committed to enhancing high-quality early learning from prenatal through 3rd grade in Washington and advancing the principles of racial equity.

ELAC's composition also needs to meet the description in its authorizing language: "The Council shall include diverse, statewide representation from public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. Its membership shall reflect regional, racial, and cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the state" (RCW 43.215.090). As noted below, under *Appointing Authority*, the Governor will be responsible for ensuring this diversity and composition.

### Number and representation of members

ELAC should be expanded from the 23 members named in RCW 43.215.090 to the 35 members described below. This expansion would add to ELAC representatives from:

- Each of the 10 Regional Coalitions.
- The Early Learning Action Alliance (a 50-member coalition of nonprofits and associations working to advance early learning in Washington).
- Child Care Aware of Washington.
- Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems representative. (Recommended to increase Washington's Competitiveness for the upcoming Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems [ECCS] Grant application.)

In addition all ELAC members should be affiliated with statewide networks and associations, or with the Regional Coalitions. These affiliations would expand ELAC's understanding of issues and innovations in the field, enhance its communication with communities, and increase its ability to promote joint action across sectors.

The proposed membership does not eliminate positions. However, it does specify the expertise and affiliation of the current three Governor's early learning expert positions. Positions are not recommended for elimination or replacement as they are either playing key roles and/or are required by the federal *Head Start Act of 2007*, which requires certain membership. (See Appendix Q for a comparison of federal and state membership requirements.)

### Appointment process and voting

- **Nominations.** To ensure that members are affiliated with statewide or regional coalitions/associations, the appropriate statewide associations and networks should nominate members for the Governor's appointment.
- **Appointing Authority.** Except as noted in the list below, the Governor should appoint members. This is consistent with ELAC's authorizing legislation. In making appointments, the Governor would be responsible for ensuring that ELAC includes "regional, racial, and cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the state" as stated in the ELAC authorizing language.
- **Voting/Non-Voting.** The Director of DEL is designated as a nonvoting member since ELAC is to advise DEL. Representatives from other state agencies should be voting members, except when they are asking for ELAC's advice. In these cases, they should recuse themselves from voting on related recommendations.

### Early Learning Advisory Council membership

The following is the recommended ELAC membership.

**Table 10. Recommended ELAC Membership: 35 Members (22 current, 13 new)**

| #  | Expertise and/or Affiliation  |
|----|---|
| 1  | Department of Early Learning Director   |
| 1  | Office of Financial Management  |
| 1  | Department of Social and Health Services  |
| 1  | Department of Health  |
| 1  | Student Achievement Council   |
| 1  | State Board for Community and Technical Colleges  |
| 1  | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI Designates)  |
| 1  | Representative of Thrive by Five Washington (to be appointed by Thrive by Five Washington Board)  |
| 2  | Child care providers, one child care family home provider and one child care center provider affiliated with regional/ statewide associations   |
| 1  | Head Start State Collaboration Director   |
| 1  | Representative from Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant, Seasonal or Tribal Head Start  |
| 1  | Local Education Agency representative associated with regional or statewide associations  |
| 1  | Representative of state agency responsible for Early Intervention   |
| 2  | Two members of the House of Representatives, one from each caucus designated by the House   |
| 2  | Two members of the Senate, one from each caucus designated by the Senate  |
| 2  | Parents, one from DEL's parent advisory group and one representing statewide Associations, or organizations that engage families with children from birth through 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade (such as PTSA, HS/ECEAP Parent Ambassadors) |
| 1  | Tribal representative, designated by sovereign tribal governments   |
| 1  | Representative from the Washington Federation of Independent Schools  |
| 10 | One representative from each of the 10 Regional Coalitions  |
| 1  | Representative of the Early Learning Action Alliance  |
| 1  | Child Care Aware of Washington representative   |
| 1  | Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems representative  |

### ***Regional Coordination: Regional Coalitions Recommendations***

#### **Development of Regional Coalitions**

For many years early learning champions in Washington have been working hard to create “tables” around which diverse players can meet to consider, plan and implement early learning services. At the state level the Early Learning Advisory Council was created to do this, with a new iteration part of the recommendations in this report (see Recommendations #6, #7, and #8). Key state agencies have formed collaborations such as the Washington Early Learning Partnership to plan and advance joint initiatives that span the work of different agencies and sectors. Similarly, early learning professionals, parents, and business and civic leaders in local communities have created networks and coalitions to: explore and understand localized needs; plan joint action to expand services; improve quality; and build public support. Over the past several years, 10 Infant/Toddler Regional Steering Committees and Regional

Coalitions have built and normalized their structures and are now integrating their efforts. These 10 Regional Coalitions plan and implement regional and state-level initiatives tied to the Ready & Successful strategies of the *Washington Early Learning Plan*. Increasingly, these coalitions have become important platforms for designing and implementing local efforts (such as developmental screening outreach) and statewide initiatives (such as WaKIDS, Early Achievers, and Love. Talk. Play.)

These Regional Coalitions are a reflection of what Washington leaders understand from best practices in other states (as noted in Appendix F) and Washington’s experience through more than a decade of early learning coalition work. This experience shows that the improvement of early learning systems accelerates with clearly defined roles and well-defined relationships among actors across sectors.

**Figure 4. Map of Regional Coalitions**



### Strengthening the Regional Coalitions

Many of the barriers stakeholders identified in this project’s community engagement process relate to the need for sufficient, high-quality, and culturally competent early learning services available in local communities. Stakeholder comments included: “There are not enough providers for some types of services”; “There are not enough people who meet professional standards in some parts of the state and in some communities of color”; and “The transition from early learning to elementary school is tough for families.” To address these issues effectively requires thoughtful and coordinated local and regional action, along with support from and coordination with state-level partners.

With the advent of the ELAC, the Early Learning Partnership and the Regional Coalitions across the state, Washington has taken great strides to improve the state’s early learning system. These collaborations help give structure to interactions at the state and regional levels to better address these barriers, and better support children and families. While there have always been some connections among state and local partners, it is often difficult on short timelines to determine which players need to be involved, and engage them in needed deliberation. Now, with state and regional partners’ success in formalizing and strengthening roles and relationships at each level (state, ELAC, regional networks/coalitions), all involved can potentially take joint action to build and refine the early learning system.

This set of recommendations aims to create a visible, durable and efficient method for accomplishing these goals and engaging a variety of community partners on issues important to families. Creating the consistent set of roles and relationships described in the *Regional Roles in the Early Learning System Functions* (see Table 9, above) will give state legislative and agency decision makers a clear place to seek perspective, insight and guidance as they plan state issues. At the same time, local and regional players will be able to effectively advance their local initiatives, integrate systems, and close the opportunity gap for local families. The recommended strengthening of the Regional Coalitions will also create a known place for diverse stakeholders to become engaged, voice their needs and interests, and mobilize to increase public support for early learning.

The recommendations below and the associated implementation steps aim to help coalitions embody the *Characteristics of Effective Coalitions* listed in the table below, and developed and vetted with Regional Coalitions as part of this project. This list of characteristics is drawn from the project's research review of collaborative leadership, collective impact and early learning governance, along with research into best practices in North Carolina, Arizona and Oklahoma. Though each coalition may manifest these characteristics in different ways and over different timeframes associated with their stage of development, these characteristics can help guide implementation of this project's recommendations.

**Table 11. Characteristics of Effective Regional Coalitions**

| Effective Regional Coalitions have . . . |  |
|--|--|
| 1.                                       | <b>Capable, credible leadership</b> with access to elected officials and community leaders. Able to build needed relationships, work together to set priorities, make decisions, implement plans, and hold partners and themselves accountable for achieving their objectives.   |
| 2.                                       | <b>Effective governance and decision-making structures</b> that enable the coalition and its workgroups to gain credibility among local, regional and state system partners by demonstrating transparency, engaging diverse communities, and setting and implementing priorities.  |
| 3.                                       | <b>Distributed leadership and action with clear roles</b> across executive leadership structures, a Coordinator, and other coalition workgroups and committees. Leaders represent and bridge multiple sectors, racial and ethnic groups, and areas of the region.  |
| 4.                                       | <b>Authority/influence</b> and ability to allocate, guide and change the way services are planned, delivered and customized among partners.  |
| 5.                                       | <b>Credibility</b> that is earned by demonstrating transparency of decision-making, fairness, and value to the community and to members.   |
| 6.                                       | <b>Savvy system-building and community-building skills</b> that bridge systems, engage communities, and influence regional and state systems and services.   |
| 7.                                       | <b>Effective relationships</b> and active engagement with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Regional Early Learning System Partners</i> (such as, K-12 schools, health, child care and early intervention) who work together to build effective systems and improve child and family outcomes.</li> <li>• <i>Families and providers</i> to learn and understand what works and what needs strengthening, and to create solutions and course corrections.</li> <li>• <i>Communities of color and low-income communities</i> to identify barriers, and create effective strategies for improving the learning and development of children who are furthest from opportunity.</li> </ul> |
| 8.                                       | <b>Ability to gather and use anecdotal and quantitative data</b> and measures to guide priority setting, program/system improvements and accountability.   |
| 9.                                       | <b>Establishment and revision of strategic direction</b> through analysis of useful anecdotal and quantitative data, fair and transparent decision-making, and use of a multi-year Action Plan that guides coalition action  |

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Effective Regional Coalitions have . . .

and connects local, regional and state priorities.

10. **Effective cultivation and engagement of champions** among the general public and elected officials to mobilize support for regional and statewide goals.
  11. **Simple multi-level regional communication protocols/mechanisms** to understand emerging issues and offer insight to deliberations.
- 

The recommendations for Regional Coalitions align well with the capacity building efforts that Thrive by Five Washington and the Department of Early Learning have supported for several years in the Infant Toddler Regions and Regional Coalitions. However, each coalition will need to assess its own capacity to implement the recommendations.

Note that the tasks the recommendations in this report suggest that each of the three “levels” (ELAC, DEL and the Early Learning Partnership, and Regional Coalitions) carry out are interlinked. For example, the Regional Coalitions can effectively partner in selecting and using the statewide performance goals only after ELAC and DEL develop a collaborative stakeholder engagement process (see the discussion of Recommendation #1, above). The Implementation Plan in Section XI of this report provides symbols to flag these interdependencies.

***RECOMMENDATION 9. Continue to strengthen the effectiveness and durability of Regional Coalitions.***

For the past several years, local coalitions (often at the county level) have been working to connect their efforts and articulate relationships so that their Regional Coalition has a good understanding of local needs. These efforts have enabled communities with strengths in a specific part of the regional early learning system to support other parts of the region. In addition, private and public agencies have worked hard with the Regional Coalitions to support various statewide and regional initiatives, and secure an adequate level of funding to allow Regional Coalitions to develop and carry out these initiatives successfully. A key part of ensuring a durable and consistent structure across the state will be to identify a durable funding source for the Regional Coalitions.

Currently, this multi-funder approach (funded by Thrive by Five Washington, DEL and six other funders through “Community Momentum” grants) supports operational development, program expansion and system strengthening efforts. It also funds each region to implement specific work streams (such as WaKIDS, Infant Toddler consultation and home visiting development). This historic and current work forms a strong foundation for the state-local coordination structure.

Individual regions vary in their geographic size, population and the number of unique communities whose needs must be understood and addressed. They also vary in the length of time that Regional Coalitions have “coalesced” their planning and implementation into a regional scope. One of the keys to success for the State and Local Coordination Project recommendations is having predictable roles, responsibilities and relationships. All coalitions should work to strengthen their effectiveness by:

- Assessing their existing structure, capacity and dedicated resources against the roles the *Regional Roles in the Early Learning System Functions* identifies, and identifying areas to strengthen.

- Continuing to develop as a unified regional structure, integrating with the Infant/Toddler Regional Steering Committees structure and work.
- Reviewing the *Characteristics of Effective Coalitions*, and identifying the coalition's strengths and unique ways to further strengthen them.
- Taking steps to assure that the coalition has a visible, accessible and consistently used "table," founded on authentic relationships with organizations, providers, and people that are representative of families in their region, to serve regional and state planning and implementation needs.
- Reviewing the coalition's operational structure and leadership, adopting guiding documents and other mechanisms to ensure: effective decision-making; broad agreement; effective implementation; and regional- and state-level influence.
- Identifying the coalition members' knowledge, skills, relationships and ability to move local, regional and state early learning priorities forward, and seek members who could help the coalition further this aim.

***RECOMMENDATION 10. Increase engagement of diverse regional stakeholders.***

As stakeholders noted during public engagement for this project, there are many "structural" and "relational" barriers that children and families experience as they try to access the supports and services that they need in order to be successful. Many of these barriers are by-products of the way the early learning system has "emerged" from differing purposes, funding streams and program models over the past 50 years.

Moreover, children and families experience many of these barriers at a local service point in their communities. The opportunities for improvement that stakeholders identified during the project's public engagement focus on ways to bring together professionals from many early learning related disciplines in conjunction with parents who use the services to design better approaches and overcome barriers at the local and state levels. These reasons alone suggest that the existing diverse set of professionals at the Regional Coalition tables needs to be even more diversified to include more parents, and early elementary (K-3) and health professionals. In addition, broadening engagement to a wider community will help build public will and support for early learning across the state.

To realize all these opportunities, some Regional Coalitions will need to strengthen their efforts to engage other champions who may not be directly involved in delivering or receiving early learning services. Moreover, efforts to close the opportunity gap and increase equity will require engaging different voices from those often at formal tables. Regional Coalitions will need to articulate different types of engagement and membership in regional deliberation and action in order to capture these varied types of engagement. The table below provides a sample framework that might form a useful starting point for Regional Coalitions to develop their own stakeholder engagement processes.

**Table 12. Sample Types of Stakeholder Engagement for Regional Coalitions**

| Engagement Opportunities                   |   |  |  |         | Audience                   |               |               |                       |                |   |
|--|---|--|--|---------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|---|
| Roles                                      | Opportunities   | Responsibilities   | "Asks"   | Parents | Cultural Community Leaders | Professionals | Organizations | Community Influencers | General Public |   |
|  |   |  |  |         |                            |               |               |                       |                | <i>Inside Formal Coalition Membership</i> |
| Coalition Officer                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead regional initiative</li> <li>Participate in regional governance</li> <li>Represent region at ELAC</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee regional initiatives</li> <li>Promote ELRC effective functioning</li> <li>Represent regional interests</li> <li>Promote joint state-local priorities</li> <li>Participate in Joint Performance Goals/CQI</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thought leadership</li> <li>In-kind and/or funding support</li> <li>Leadership and advocacy</li> </ul>                                | X       | X                          | X             |               | X                     |                |   |
| Coalition Member                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share perspective &amp; insight</li> <li>Vote on regional priorities and other decisions</li> <li>Learn about state/regional priorities and share with others</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring local and regional issues to table</li> <li>Bring state and regional issues and priorities to their field and community</li> <li>Coordinate regional initiatives</li> <li>Participate in Joint Performance Goals/CQI</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination</li> <li>In-kind and/or funding support</li> <li>Service/ Procedure change</li> </ul>                                    | X       | X                          | X             | X             | X                     |                |   |
| Topical Point Person                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serve as regional expert on a topic</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay abreast of topical issues, developments and strategies</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information, skill and expertise in topical area</li> <li>Provide leadership</li> </ul>                                       | X       | X                          | X             |               | X                     |                |   |
| <i>Outside Formal Coalition Membership</i> |   |  |  |         |                            |               |               |                       |                |   |
| Advisor                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share perspective and insight</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be knowledgeable about specific customer groups, services and systems</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide experiential/expert advice</li> </ul>   | X       | X                          | X             |               | X                     |                |   |
| Partner                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect ELRC work to other community priorities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove procedural or policy obstacles</li> <li>Provide in-kind and/or funding support</li> <li>Speak on behalf of regional efforts</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy /procedure change</li> <li>In-kind and/or funding support</li> <li>Representation of EL perspective at other tables</li> </ul> |         |                            |               | X             |                       |                |   |
| Advocate                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand current initiatives</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for regional priorities to policymakers and others</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build and leverage relationships</li> <li>Take advocacy action</li> </ul>   | X       | X                          | X             | X             | X                     |                |   |
| Follower                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive useful information</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make use of regional initiative information and services</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell others about the ELRC work</li> </ul>  | X       | X                          | X             | X             | X                     | X              |   |
| Event Participant                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend ELRC events</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in regional work</li> </ul>  | X       | X                          | X             | X             | X                     | X              |   |

To strengthen and diversify members and other supporters of regional work, it is recommended that each coalition:

- Identify the types of engagement opportunities they will use to involve different types of stakeholders, naming the roles, responsibilities, opportunities and "asks." Doing so will enable this diverse set of parents, community influencers, cultural communities and professionals to

easily share their wisdom as the coalition makes decisions. Increasing community engagement will also broaden support for the early learning movement.

- Document and publicize the committees, processes and protocols that allow a diverse set of players to share their needs and experience, take joint action, and champion regional priorities in their communities.
- Assess current outreach efforts to different cultural, income-level and geographically remote communities, and implement new outreach approaches where necessary.
- Assess current skills, infrastructure and processes to cultivate advocates, funders and policymakers. Then take action to strengthen these functions. Be intentional about mentoring, training and supporting new leaders in communities furthest away from opportunity.
- Assess current skill, infrastructure and processes to raise parent and public awareness about regional priorities, initiatives and services, and take action to strengthen these functions.

***RECOMMENDATION 11. Strengthen joint regional and state action to achieve common goals.***

The above recommendations for the Regional Coalitions are focused on strengthening their infrastructure to assure important opportunities for input and engagement. However, as “collective impact” research and other sources show, the opportunities this State and Local Coordination Project has identified and the goals in the *Washington Early Learning Plan* cannot be achieved merely by enhancing capacity. Ensuring that each Regional Coalition serves as a forum and coordinator to implement local priorities, and to work in common cause with other regions and state-level partners is key to success. Similarly, intentional effort to connect local and regional priorities and action with state priorities and initiatives can help to strengthen the cycle of planning, acting and refining our efforts as we learn. In the past several years, the power of joint action has been richly demonstrated as state and regional partners have worked together to implement important initiatives such as WaKIDS, Love. Talk. Play., and Infant Toddler consultation services. These efforts have shown that proactive implementation planning works and “after the fact” corrections are not needed when we use regional and state structures to advance “mutually-reinforcing action.”

As Washington continues to expand and improve early learning services and systems, our ability to close the opportunity gap and accelerate children’s preparedness and success will depend on our ability to work in concert. Additionally, as the need to address the increasing racial and ethnic diversity in our state and remove the most difficult barriers increases, everyone in the early learning field will need to tap into the rich experience of players at multiple levels. Working together to use the power of all local, regional and state players is also integral to our ability to build broad support for early learning across Washington.

The Regional Coalitions can also reach out to state partners to connect their aspirations with state plans. Each Regional Coalition should:

- Nominate a regional advisor to participate in deliberation at the ELAC table and bring other community partners to important deliberations.
- Negotiate multi-directional communication protocols to facilitate information sharing and learning among coalitions and between coalitions and ELAC.
- Review and refine their *agenda setting process* so that local and regional insight, priorities, concerns and need can easily be identified, and shared in regional and statewide deliberations.

- Create or refine an *Action Plan* that articulates regional initiatives (including those connected to statewide initiatives) and drives joint action to implement initiatives and close the opportunity gap.
- Participate in the statewide performance goal selection process and use performance goals to continuously improve regional action.
- Work with statewide advocacy organizations and regional partners to build capacity and skill in advocating for regional priorities.

## Conclusion

The recommendations for state and local coordination in this report can result in important benefits for children and families. Ultimately:

- Families and those working at the local and regional level will have a consistent voice in shaping early learning policies and programs.
- People will join together in their region to understand their needs, learn from each other, and find ways to improve early learning opportunities for all children.
- People from all regions of the state and those at the state level will work together to close the opportunity gap for young children.
- All children will have what they need for healthy development and learning at every step from prenatal through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

## XI. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**Note:** The Steering Committee is suggesting the following plan to implement the recommendations in this report. Before this Implementation Plan becomes final, the implementing entities will need to discuss and refine specific implementation details to ensure that the particular situations of each are met. Final implementation plans will be negotiated with members of the Washington Early Learning Partnership to ensure quick and effective action. Implementation topics include: specific action steps; suggested timing; and the resources needed to carry out this work.

### Taking Concerted Action

**Overview.** The recommendations in this report aim to create visible, durable and efficient methods to build an early learning system that can offer children what they need, when they need it, based on child and family requirements, and available resources.

This implementation plan describes how to put the State and Local Coordination Project recommendations in place. It shows how the different elements connect, suggests the steps to take and provides an estimate of the costs involved. Important aspects to keep in mind are:

1. The actions are interconnected and interdependent. Improving coordination requires new actions and connections between state agencies/organizations, between the state and regional groups, and among groups within each region. The plan refers to these as state-state, state-regional, and regional. As with an engine, if one part is not working, the engine will not run well.
2. Some actions will take place simultaneously at each level (Washington Early Learning Partnership, ELAC, and Early Learning Regional Coalitions). For example, the recommendations include developing statewide performance goals. DEL, the Partnership Group, ELAC, and the Regional Coalitions will each be involved in selecting the goals, the indicators, and a simple continuous quality improvement process to accelerate progress toward meeting the goals.
3. The actions are phased over the coming year to strike a balance between moving expeditiously to put these recommendations in place, and allowing state, regional and local early learning partners sufficient time to adopt these new structures and roles. If resources to support these changes are limited then the implementation plan could be phased in over a longer period of time.

**Overview of implementation steps.** The following table provides an overview of the proposed implementation plan steps for each of the recommendations in this report. The table also displays the steps according to the timing proposed: Near Term (1 – 2 months); Mid-Term (3 – 6 months); and Long-Term (7+ months).

**Table 13. Overview of Implementation Steps and Timing**

| Recommendation   | Near-Term (1 – 2 months)   | Mid-Term (3 – 6 months)  | Long-Term (7+ months)   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <i>Implementation of Overarching Recommendations</i>                           |  |  |   |
| 1. <b>Adopt stakeholder engagement framework</b>                               | Task 2. Use existing work planning processes to identify the type of stakeholder engagement to utilize with different projects | Task 1. Develop protocol to implement the stakeholder engagement framework   |   |
|  |  | Task 3. Develop project plans for stakeholder engagement, based on work planning decisions                               |   |
|  |  | Task 4. Conduct stakeholder engagement process   | Task 5. Communicate decisions to stakeholders (ongoing)   |
| 2. <b>Adopt performance goals and indicators</b>                               |  | Task 1. Develop draft goals and indicators   | Task 3. Prepare final recommendations   |
|  |  | Task 2. Gather comments and input from affected stakeholders   | Task 4. Decide on and communicate the Statewide Performance Goals and Indicators  |
|  |  |  | Task 5. Utilize a simple CQI process to review progress toward meeting performance goals (ongoing, with reports twice a year) |
| <i>Implementation of Washington Early Learning Partnership Recommendations</i> |  |  |   |
| 3. <b>Invite DOH and DSHS to join Early Learning Partnership</b>               | Task 1. Invite DOH and DSHS leadership to participate in the partnership   | Task 2. Involve DOH and DSHS leaders and directors as appropriate for the work   |   |
| 4. <b>Create annual priorities and develop consultation process with ELAC</b>  |  | Task 1. Develop process for engaging ELAC and regional coalitions in review and comment on partnership annual priorities |   |
| 5. <b>Enhance communication between WELP and regional/local partners</b>       |  | Task 1. Create an online tool for posting current and future statewide initiatives and actions                           |   |

| Recommendation  | Near-Term (1 – 2 months)  | Mid-Term (3 – 6 months)   | Long-Term (7+ months)   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Implementation of Early Learning Advisory Council Recommendations</i>    |   |   |   |
| <b>6. Strengthen ELAC’s function in the early learning system</b>           | Task 1. Adopt the Recommendations   |   |   |
|   | Task 2. Confirm the ELAC staffing configuration and operations budget           |   |   |
| <b>7. Clarify how ELAC will carry out more focused functions</b>            |   | Task 1. Create an Ad Hoc Transition Committee   |   |
|   |   | Task 2. Create initial ELAC Work Plan   |   |
|   |   | Task 3. Develop Council Charter, Ground Rules, Member Roles and Responsibilities  |   |
|   |   | Task 4. Create the New Member Orientation Process   |   |
|   |   | Task 5. Hold a Transition Retreat   |   |
|   |   | Task 6. Institute strengthened functions and processes  |   |
| <b>8. Expand ELAC membership</b>  | Task 1. Define the interim “Regional Advisor” role and the support needed       |   |   |
|   | Task 2. Invite coalitions to identify a Regional Advisor to participate in ELAC | Task 3. Use the recommended nominations and appointments process to identify new members as terms for existing members expire |   |
|   |   |   | Task 4. Amend ELAC Authorizing Legislation to expand membership and further specify ELAC’s role |
| <i>Implementation of Early Learning Regional Coalitions Recommendations</i> |   |   |   |
| <b>9. Strengthen Regional Coalitions</b>                                    |   | Task 1. Work with state-level partners to create a stable funding source for coalition capacity (ongoing)                     |   |
|   | Task 2. Establish a well-understood and accepted regional governance structure  |   |   |
|   | Task 3. Ensure skilled and credible leadership                                  |   |   |
|   |   | Task 4. Ensure credibility, relevance, and needed expertise and infrastructure  |   |

| Recommendation  | Near-Term (1 – 2 months)   | Mid-Term (3 – 6 months)  | Long-Term (7+ months)  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>10. Increase engagement of diverse stakeholders</b>  |  | Task 1. Articulate ways, in addition to membership, that parents, businesses, elected officials, and other interested parties can share their voice and affiliate with the coalition |  |
|   |  |  | Task 2. Engage communities of color in regional initiatives (ongoing)  |
|   |  |  | Task 3. Engage other communities that are far from opportunity (ongoing)   |
|   |  |  | Task 4. Engage people who make and influence decisions in the breadth of program areas that make up the region's early learning system (ongoing) |
|   |  |  | Task 5. Raise public awareness of and participation in regional and state initiatives (ongoing)  |
| <b>11. Strengthen joint local-regional-state action</b> | Task 1. Ensure a transparent, effective and aligned process for agenda setting |  |  |
|   |  | Task 2. Implement prioritized strategies through use of an <i>Action Plan</i>  |  |
|   | Task 3. Select and support a regional advisor to participate in ELAC           |  |  |
|   |  | Task 4. Promote use of statewide performance goals to assess how well we are doing in coordinating action and delivering results   |  |
|   |  | Task 5. Establish/strengthen advocacy capacity   |  |

**Plan format.** The implementation plan for each set of recommendations includes the following elements: (1) implementation steps; (2) supporting documents and processes; (3) cost and staffing implications; and (4) schedule. A sidebar next to each recommendation provides an at-a-glance guide to the recommendation and how it relates to implementation of the other recommendations. The sections of this sidebar are:

- **Function:** Which of the functions of the early learning system the recommendation addresses. This refers to the six essential functions of an early learning system (see Table 3, above), plus an initial function (Build Relationships and Agreements, Consider Stakeholder Input), which is foundational and enables the other functions to be effective.
- **Related implementation:** Which other level(s) of the early learning system will be implementing related steps. For quick reference, the sidebar uses the following icons for the three levels: state-level agencies, ELAC, and Regional Coalitions.



State



ELAC



Coalitions

- **Capacity Needs:** The approximate dollar amount needed, and whether this funding is in place now or is still needed.
- **Time Frame:** The plan suggests when to implement the recommendation, using three time frames:
  - Near Term: One to two months.
  - Mid-Term: Three to six months.
  - Long Term: Seven months or longer.

This implementation plan concludes with a summary budget.

## Stakeholder Engagement Implementation Plan

**Overview.** It is recommended that DEL adopt a framework for engaging stakeholders in decisions the state must make to advance the goals of the *Early Learning Plan*. The framework suggests three types/levels of engagement keyed to the project’s needs. One of the objectives of this recommendation is to create a consistent approach to stakeholder engagement, so the various partners understand when and how stakeholders will be involved in providing advice about key decisions.

### **Implementation of Recommendation 1. Adopt stakeholder engagement framework.**

**Implementation steps.** DEL will need to have discussions within its staff team about how to implement the framework on a consistent basis. Developing a protocol will help assure consistency in decision making about stakeholder engagement strategies. DEL may also need to discuss its approach to stakeholder engagement with Partnership members, depending on which agency is involved in the project.

**Action Steps:**

**Task 1 – Develop protocol to implement the stakeholder engagement framework.**

- Brief DEL staff on the State and Local Coordination recommendations.

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <p>1. Build Relationships; Consider Stakeholder Input</p> |
| <p><b>Related Implementation</b></p>  |

- Provide staff with examples describing the different types of engagement, including examples used during the past several years.
- Confirm or refine the proposed “Six Questions for Choosing the Type of Stakeholder Engagement” (see Recommendation #1 above).
- Develop protocol for how decisions will be made regarding stakeholder engagement. Seek ELAC’s advice as needed.
- Share the protocol with ELAC and the Partnership Group.

**Capacity Needs**

Staff; possibly \$ with some types of engagement

**Time Frame**

Mid-term and Long-term

**Task 2 – Use existing work planning processes to identify the type of stakeholder engagement to utilize with different projects.**

**Implementation steps.** Much of the discussion about which type of stakeholder engagement to utilize for different projects can occur around two annual processes:

developing the Early Learning Partnership’s annual priorities, and creating the ELAC work plan. The discussions about those plans can include considering the type of stakeholder engagement to utilize for each priority project. In addition, new initiatives or significant changes in policy or programs may develop during the course of a year and may need some form of stakeholder engagement. In those circumstances, DEL can discuss the plans for stakeholder engagement with ELAC. If another Partnership Group agency is requesting the stakeholder engagement, they will have lead responsibility for supporting that stakeholder process.

- Use the partnership annual priorities process for discussions about the types of stakeholder engagement for major initiatives and changes.
- Use the ELAC work plan process for discussions about stakeholder engagement for major initiatives and changes.
- As issues arise during the year, DEL, or as appropriate, Partnership Group agencies, discuss stakeholder engagement plans with ELAC.
- Identify the appropriate level of engagement to use, and stakeholder groups to involve.

**Task 3 – Develop project plans for stakeholder engagement, based on work planning decisions.**

**Implementation steps.** Once the decisions have been made about which type of engagement to pursue, the responsible entity will need to develop project plans. In addition, a communication plan will need to inform stakeholders about when and how different levels of engagement will take place. The existing communication methods/structures can inform communities about the approach to stakeholder engagement. When targeted outreach would be useful, there will need to be some community-specific communication strategies.

- Develop a project plan for stakeholder engagement.
- Develop communications strategy for each stakeholder engagement effort.
- Identify resources needed to carry out stakeholder engagement.

**Task 4 – Conduct stakeholder engagement process.**

- Carry out agreed upon stakeholder engagement plan.
- Summarize comments received and major themes.

### **Task 5 –Communicate decisions to stakeholders.**

**Implementation steps.** Once decisions have been made, the lead department/agency should develop a response to those who participated in the stakeholder engagement process. The response should include the nature of the final decisions and how stakeholder comments influenced those decisions. The communications should also provide an explanation of issues that were raised, but not addressed in the final decision.

- Communicate final decisions and how stakeholder comments were used/incorporated.

#### **Supporting documents and processes**

- **Confirmed or refined questions** for using different levels of stakeholder engagement.  
*Content Elements:* See the “Six Questions” in Recommendation #1. DEL staff should review and modify as needed.
- **Protocol for DEL decision making** about stakeholder engagement.  
*Content Elements:* The protocol should identify steps necessary to make a decision. For example: (a) determine which type of engagement to use; (b) when to have discussions with Partnership and ELAC; (c) how to make mid-year decisions about stakeholder engagement as new initiatives arise; and (d) decision making authorities within DEL.
- **Early Learning Partnership annual priorities and ELAC work plan**, with level of stakeholder engagement identified, as appropriate.
- **Written schedule and process for project-based stakeholder engagement.**  
*Content Elements:* Identify which stakeholders need to be involved, create a schedule and process for engagement, frame key questions to address during stakeholder engagement, and identify resources needed to carry out the engagement.
- **Communications plan.**  
*Content Elements:* Identify when/how key stakeholders will be informed; identify communication strategies for each level of stakeholder engagement to encourage stakeholders to be involved; identify methods for receiving stakeholder input.
- **Explanation of Decisions.**  
*Content Elements:* Provide written description to inform stakeholders regarding final decisions and how comments were incorporated.

**Cost and staffing implications.** There are no additional costs for Task 1 or Task 2. There could be costs associated with Task 3, depending on the type of stakeholder engagement used. For example, any needed translation services, or consultant assistance in carrying out a broad stakeholder engagement process (such as in developing the *Early Learning Plan*) would require additional resources. There is a need for staff resources to draft a proposed schedule and process, review it with the Partnership and ELAC, and work to incorporate the comments from the review process, and communicate back to stakeholders about the final decision.

#### **Schedule**

- **Task 1.** Mid-term. The review with DEL staff and the development of protocol can occur by mid-2013.

- **Task 2.** Near-term for ELAC work plan discussions, and long-term for discussions about the Partnership annual priorities. The Partnership annual priorities process will not occur until the fourth quarter of 2013 and into the beginning of 2014.
- **Task 3.** Mid-term for the development of plans related to the ELAC work plan. As mentioned above, ELAC will develop its first work plan by mid-2013. Long-term for the developing plans related to the Early Learning Partnership’s annual priorities.

## Performance Goals Implementation Plan

The proposed selection of statewide performance goals provides an opportunity for state and regional partners to collaborate on putting this important new piece of the statewide early learning system in place. Because the purpose of the performance goals is to focus collective action, the process to select the goals should be collaborative, including review and discussions with ELAC, Early Learning Regional Coalitions and interested stakeholders. Although DEL, and perhaps other Early Learning Partnership agencies, will be the final decision makers regarding the selection of performance goals, regional partners must embrace the goals if meaningful progress is going to be made at both the state and regional levels.

The implementation includes a public engagement process to get stakeholder comments. The following implementation actions assume that DEL will use a “consultation process” to develop the performance goals (see recommendations on Stakeholder Engagement).

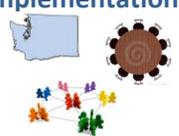
### **Implementation of Recommendation 2. Adopt performance goals and indicators.**

*Action Steps:*

#### **Task 1 – Develop draft goals and indicators.**

**Implementation steps.** DEL staff will take the lead in developing an initial draft (*preliminary list*) for review. The draft should be mindful of the criteria the recommendations suggest (for example, the goal requires both state and local actions to be successful; data are available to monitor progress). The draft should be developed using the state’s *Early Learning Plan*, review of agency and ELAC work plans, the Washington Early Learning Partnership’s annual priorities, grant objectives, and other pertinent work efforts. In addition, the draft goals should include areas where early success is possible, in order to build momentum. The preliminary draft should also include a simple continuous quality improvement process (CQI) for use by the Early Learning Regional Coalitions, and others who choose to participate (e.g. community service agencies).

- DEL staff members develop a *Preliminary List of Potential Performance Goals and Indicators*.
- Review preliminary list with Early Learning Partnership, and create an ELAC committee (including representation from the Regional Coalitions) to review and comment. The committee will work with DEL to recommend a

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <p>2. Set Standards, Goals &amp; Outcome;</p> <p>7. Be Accountable for Achieving Outcomes</p>      |
| <p><b>Related Implementation</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Capacity Needs</b></p> <p>Additional staff or consultant needed during development; Ongoing staffing</p>             |

draft *Prioritized List of Potential Performance Goals and Indicators*, along with the intended results.

needed

**Time Frame**

Mid-Term

**Task 2 – Gather comments and input from affected stakeholders.**

**Implementation steps.** DEL will work with the newly established ELAC committee to develop a plan, and then conduct a consultation process (as defined in the Stakeholder Engagement recommendations) to gather comments from affected

stakeholders on the *Prioritized List of Potential Performance Goals and Indicators*. It will be important to engage the Early Learning Regional Coalitions in the public comment process, since they represent local viewpoints (providing a perspective that is closest to children and families, providers and teachers, and other stakeholders), and they understand the unique needs in their regions.

- DEL works with ELAC committee, which will include representatives from the Early Learning Regional Coalitions, to design a consultation process for outreach, including intentional engagement activities with stakeholders most affected.
- Conduct outreach with stakeholders, engaging regional coalitions and others.
- Prepare summary of comments and reactions to prioritized list of performance goals and indicators.

**Task 3 – Prepare final recommendations.**

**Implementation steps.** Once the consultation process is completed, the ELAC committee will work with DEL staff (or Early Learning Partnership members, as appropriate) to revise and finalize recommendations.

- The ELAC committee will consider the public comments, discuss any possible modifications, and develop final recommendations for *Statewide Performance Goals and Indicators*.
- The committee will forward its recommendations to ELAC for final recommendation to DEL (and the Early Learning Partnership members, as appropriate) for decisions.
- Final decisions should include identifying lead responsibility for collecting data, supporting partners in implementing the simple CQI process, and reporting on the performance goals and indicators.

**Task 4 – Decide on and communicate the Statewide Performance Goals and Indicators.**

**Implementation steps.**

- DEL (and/or possibly another lead state agency) will make final decisions on performance goals.
- Develop and implement a communications plan to inform state, regional and local early learning stakeholders about the decisions regarding the final *Statewide Performance Goals and Indicators*.
- DEL (and/or another lead state agency) communicates the reasons underlying the decision, how stakeholder comments were used or influenced the decisions, and plans to develop and support implementation of a simple CQI process.

**Task 5 – Utilize a simple CQI process to review progress toward meeting performance goals.****Implementation steps.**

- DEL staff, working with partner agency staff and Early Learning Regional Coalitions, as appropriate, create a simple CQI process and a plan for supporting partners in implementing the CQI process.
- DEL staff, working with partnership agency staff as appropriate, provide updated data for CQI use and progress reports twice a year—at mid-year and again at year-end.
- DEL, ELAC, the Partnership and the Early Learning Regional Coalitions will use the reports as the basis for discussions about quality improvements, including any needed program changes, process improvements, or modifications to policies.
- Use the reports to inform development of the next year’s performance goals and indicators, and the annual ELAC work plan and annual Partnership priorities.
- DEL and/or partnership members should report progress to early learning stakeholders and the public in a transparent fashion.

**Supporting documents and processes**

- **Preliminary List of Potential Performance Goals and Indicators** (matched with suggested selection criteria) developed by DEL staff and a simple CQI process to review with ELAC and the Early Learning Partnership.
- **Prioritized List of Potential Performance Goals and Indicators** developed by ELAC committee for review with the Early Learning Partnership and ELAC, and ready for public review.
- **Consultation process** for gathering comments from affected stakeholders, including a strategy for reaching rural and ethnic communities. Develop materials for outreach, and summary of comments received.
- Develop **summary of committee and ELAC recommendations**.
- **Final decisions** by DEL, and possibly Early Learning Partnership members, for *Statewide Performance Goals and Indicators* should include explanation of any decisions different than ELAC recommendations, and identification of lead responsibility for tracking and reporting.
- Develop **communications plan** and materials for communicating final decisions.
- Simple **CQI process** with a common **template/format for reporting on progress**, using CQI process and a plan to support partners in implementing the CQI process.

**Cost and staffing implications.** The implementation plan for ELAC addresses the need to fully staff and support ELAC. Creating performance goals and indicators will require staff resources (and/or consultants in the first year) to: 1) manage the development of the preliminary list, 2) draft the recommendations, 3) staff the ELAC committee and the stakeholder engagement (consultation process), 4) support the committee and staff in developing final recommendations, and 5) provide technical assistance to the regional coalitions to implement the CQI process. DEL staff, working with partnership agency staff as appropriate, can prepare the progress reports.

**Schedule.** Develop the *Preliminary List of Potential Performance Goals and Indicators* in the mid-term. Develop the recommendations and *Prioritized List of Potential Performance Goals and Indicators* in the mid-term. Gather and summarize affected stakeholder comments in the mid-term. Develop final

recommendations in the long-term. Communicate the new performance goals and indicators to the early learning community in the long-term. Create the progress reports in the long-term. Tracking will continue on an ongoing basis, with reports at mid-year and year-end.

## Washington Early Learning Partnership Implementation Plan

**Overview.** It is recommended that the state continue to build upon the Washington Early Learning Partnership, created in 2009 by a joint resolution of the members. The partnership is one of the cornerstones of enhancing coordination between state and local partners, among state agencies, and with private funders.

### **Implementation of Recommendation 3. Invite DOH and DSHS to join Early Learning Partnership.**

**Implementation steps.** With the change in administration in state government, there is an opportunity to work with new leadership in the state agencies. The Joint Resolution was created by the participating members and, therefore, can be amended by them. It does not require legislative approval.

*Action Steps:*

**Task 1 – Invite DOH and DSHS leadership to participate in the partnership.**

- DEL leadership confirms with the Governor’s staff the approach to invite/encourage DOH and DSHS to join the partnership.
- The leadership of the current partnership agencies co-signs a letter to invite DOH and DSHS to join the partnership, explaining the purpose and role of the partnership. Partnership leadership conducts personal communication with leaders at DOH and DSHS.
- Assuming one or both departments agree to join the partnership, draft and sign an amendment to the Joint Resolution.
- Select key legislative and/or community forums where all partners can participate in presentations to foster greater understanding about the new partnership (similar to presentations made by DEL, OSPI and Thrive leadership in the past two years).

**Task 2 – Involve DOH and DSHS leaders and directors as appropriate for the work.**

**Implementation steps.** The department leadership, and the division directors and managers overseeing programs that are considered part of the early learning system should participate in the Early Learning Partnership. Currently, DEL, OSPI and Thrive leadership and directors/managers participate in the monthly meetings. DOH and DSHS leadership would participate on a periodic basis, as issues arise on the partnership agenda (estimated between two and four times each year), while the DOH and DSHS Secretaries would participate monthly.

- Once leadership at DOH and DSHS has agreed to participate in the partnership, identify directors and managers in each department who will participate in monthly partnership meetings.

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build Relationships; Consider Stakeholder Input</li> <li>2. Set Standards, Goals &amp; Outcomes</li> <li>3. Choose Strategies &amp; Priorities</li> <li>7. Be Accountable for Achieving Outcomes</li> </ol> |
| <p><b>Related Implementation</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Capacity Needs</b></p> <p>Continuation of roughly the same level of resources needed</p>  |
| <p><b>Time Frame</b></p> <p>Mid-Term</p>  |

- Create an ad hoc transition staff work group to assist in incorporating the staff and identifying key issues from the two new partnership agencies. The ad hoc group would include one staff member from each of the partnership members, and would last as long as the work group members felt it was providing value.
- Prepare background materials, and brief leadership and directors on expectations for participation and background about partnership. Initial briefings should include discussions about the role of lead agencies and the role of other partnership members in the annual priorities.
- Identify the range of topics (in addition to the 2013 annual priorities) that partnership members would like to discuss with DOH and/or DSHS. Begin to include those topics on the partnership agendas.

### **Supporting documents and processes**

- New Partner **Invitation Letter**.
- Amended **Joint Resolution**.
- **Briefing materials** for DSHS and DOH leadership and directors.

*Content Elements:* annual priorities, sample agendas, sample meeting summaries, summary of Early Learning Plan, Partnership Ground Rules, etc.

**Cost and staffing implications.** The facilitator for the current partnership meetings is a neutral party. Thrive provides funding to support that facilitation. No additional cost or staffing would be required to carry out this recommendation. There is no added expenditure to perform the other tasks.

**Schedule.** Assuming newly-appointed leadership of DOH and DSHS are in place in the first quarter of the year, the new partnership members could be in place and the Joint Resolution amended in the mid-term. DOH and/or DSHS should begin participating in the partnership meetings once each agrees – in the mid-term.

### ***Implementation of Recommendation 4. Continue annual priorities and develop consultation process with ELAC.***

**Implementation steps.** The current Early Learning Partnership identifies annual priorities the members work on jointly. By consulting with ELAC and the Regional Coalitions before finalizing their annual priorities the partnership will be able to hear comments from statewide, regional and local partners before finalizing the priorities. It will also inform ELAC and the Regional Coalitions as they develop their annual work plans and priorities. As part of the adoption process, agree upon topics of common interest for which to ask ELAC's advice.

#### *Action Steps:*

#### ***Task 1 – Develop process for engaging ELAC and regional coalitions in review and comment on partnership annual priorities.***

- Create a schedule and process for developing the partnership's annual priorities that includes consultation with ELAC and the Regional Coalitions (through their participation on ELAC). The schedule will need to accommodate the fact that the executive branch typically establishes

legislative priorities in November, and the annual priorities should be available to share with the incoming Legislature by mid-January.

- Initiate discussions among the partnership, and with ELAC, regarding the method and timing for periodic review of progress achieved on the state's *Early Learning Plan* strategies and outcomes.

#### **Supporting documents and processes.**

- **Written schedule and process** for establishing partnership annual priorities.
- Draft and final **partnership annual priorities**.

**Cost and staffing implications.** There is no additional cost to carry out this recommendation. Staff resources will be required to draft a proposed schedule and process, review it with the partnership, ELAC and Regional Coalition representatives, and work to incorporate the various comments, as appropriate, during the review process.

**Schedule.** Mid-term. This recommendation should target the 2014 annual priorities as the first year of implementation of the new schedule and process. Develop the proposed schedule and process in the summer of 2013, with agreement by the partnership in early fall 2013. Develop the annual priorities between October 2013 and early January 2014.

#### ***Implementation of Recommendation 5. Enhance communication between Washington Early Learning Partnership and regional and local early learning partners***

##### *Action Steps:*

##### ***Task 1 – Create an online tool for posting current and future statewide initiatives and actions.***

- Conduct discussions with ELAC about the kind of information that would be most useful to include.
- Create a template for the calendar of activities; discuss that template with representatives from ELAC and Regional Coalitions.
- Establish and post the calendar on the DEL website. Encourage other agencies and partners to link to the online calendar.
- Update the schedule on a quarterly basis. Partnership members' leadership teams will need to identify new actions as they arise.

#### **Supporting documents and processes**

- **Draft template** of schedule.
- Final version of schedule and **proposed method of communication**.

**Cost and staffing implications.** There is no additional cost to carry out this recommendation. Communication staff from the partnership organizations will need to discuss the concept with ELAC, draft a template, post the final schedule, and update it quarterly based on information the partnership members' leadership teams provide.

**Schedule.** Mid-term, after ELAC has made a transition to its new role and membership.

## Early Learning Advisory Council Implementation Plan

**Overview.** Project recommendations call for substantially strengthening ELAC’s state-to-local coordination function in order to promote joint state and regional action, and continuous improvement of services, systems and results for children and families. The changes will:

- Extend ELAC’s reach and connections to key stakeholders and those closest to families by selecting members affiliated with regional and statewide associations and groups, such as the Early Learning Regional Coalitions, the Head Start ECEAP parent ambassadors, Child Care Aware of Washington, and the Association of Washington School Principals.
- Promote mutual understanding and learning about state and regional needs, perspectives and priorities, as well as associated challenges and solutions by deepening the understanding of the different experiences of Washington’s diverse geographic, ethnic and cultural communities, including those furthest from opportunity.
- Galvanize joint action across state and local communities by fostering two-way communication of state and regional priorities, issues and innovations among ELAC members and their networks, and by identifying joint priorities and performance goals.

Realizing ELAC’s potential in this next development phase of Washington’s early learning system will require a marked shift in culture and roles. The characteristics required for a successful transition and increasing ELAC’s value include:

- A *Work Plan* that addresses important, substantive issues that engage members.
- Adequate committees, committee members and staffing to be successful in making strategic recommendations that inform decisions in meaningful ways, and fostering joint action among members and partners.
- Shared ownership and commitment to the new roles, structures and processes.
- A tangible and positive return on investment that allows members to see the value of their investment of time and energy.

**Sequencing.** The recommended changes will require shifts in ELAC’s operating processes and culture. Gradual shifts can create uncertainty and typically take longer to effect a transition. With this in mind, the *ELAC Implementation Plan* recommends phasing the transition in five steps:

1. Adopt the project’s Final Recommendations, including ELAC’s function and roles, and confirm the *Implementation Plan* and timing.
2. Create an initial *Work Plan* and guiding documents.
3. Engage Early Learning Regional Coalition representatives in ELAC, initially as “ELAC Regional Advisors” until the authorizing legislation can be amended.
4. Conduct a transition retreat marking the change from the old to the new way of working, subsequently initiating the new structure, roles and operating processes.
5. Amend the authorizing legislation to enable expanding ELAC’s membership.

The following implementation steps for each of the three ELAC recommendations reflect this phasing. A suggested schedule is included at the end of this section of the *Implementation Plan*.

### ***Implementation of Recommendation 6. Strengthen ELAC’s function in the early learning system***

**Implementation steps.** ELAC recommends adoption of the State and Local Coordination Project recommendations, including the strengthened ELAC functions and roles.

*Action Steps:*

**Task 1 - Adopt the Recommendations.**

- Steering Committee forwards this project’s recommendations to ELAC for discussion and recommendation.
- ELAC makes its recommendation to DEL and the Washington Early Learning Partnership.
- The partnership approves the recommendations.

**Task 2 - Confirm the ELAC staffing configuration and operations budget.**

- DEL identifies needed ELAC staffing and a meetings/operations budget for ELAC.
- DEL communicates the staffing configuration and meetings/ operations budget to ELAC.

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <p>1. Build Relationships and Agreements</p>   |
| <p><b>Related Implementation</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Capacity Need</b></p> <p>Will require maintaining current FTE capacity.</p>  |
| <p><b>Time Frame</b></p> <p>Near Term and Mid-Term</p>   |

**ELAC staffing, staff configuration and costs.** Appropriate staffing and a modest operations budget are key elements in ELAC’s transition into a council of high-level members who recommend improvements regarding complex, system-building issues and promote joint state, local and cross-sector action.

It is recommended that ELAC be staffed by a highly skilled full-time lead ELAC staff position and a .5 FTE administrative support position.

Issues upon which ELAC advice will likely be sought span state agencies, DEL divisions, multiple fields and professions and communities. Because of this, it is recommended that the responsibility for ELAC be vested at a level within the Department that has agency-wide purview, the ability to see issues and direct action across the agency, and commands the respect of high-level colleagues in other state agencies and stakeholder groups.

It is recommended that the responsibilities of the ELAC lead staff position include:

- Developing and maintain partnerships with state and community-level constituents.
- Supporting ELACs ongoing development, implementation of the ELAC workplan and joint action among cross-sector partners to advance the State Early Learning Plan and the ELAC work plan.
- Facilitating development of performance goals and related CQI processes and reporting.
- Facilitating stakeholder engagement processes, stakeholder engagement in ELAC, and regular updating of the Partnership Group calendar of state-level initiatives.
- Communicating ELAC and ELP accomplishments, needs, questions and issues to agency executive leadership as well as to key partner agencies and preparing reports and records relevant to the operation of ELAC and the ELP.

Key skills and experience needed for this position include:

- Demonstrated experience facilitating small and large group processes, fostering deliberation and confirming agreements. Ability to use past and current agreements to guide action of a collaborative body and ensure results.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills to foster collaboration, thoughtful consideration and credibility of ELAC’s deliberative processes and communication with stakeholders.
- Sophisticated planning, policy and data analysis skills to identify and present complex issues to the ELAC and to support the Council in using data to develop informed advice and system building recommendations.
- Excellent organizational and project management skills and the ability to support groups of diverse individuals (perspective, experience, interest and knowledge) to develop and execute agendas, work plans and time sensitive projects.

A federal grant, which ends in the summer of 2013, currently supports ELAC staffing and meeting expenses. Additional funds and fund sources will need to be identified to support continued staffing and operations costs.

**Schedule.** Near-term. ELAC should confirm the functions and roles in the early spring of 2013. DEL should establish the ELAC staffing capacity and configuration, and the meeting/operations budget for the remainder of 2013 by May 2013 so that this can be considered in plans for the initial implementation and work plan.

***Implementation of Recommendation 7. Clarify how ELAC will carry out more focused functions***

The State and Local Coordination recommendations include establishing a *Council Charter, Committee Charter Template, Member Roles and Responsibilities*, and a *Work Plan* for ELAC. The *Charter* will articulate ELAC’s purpose, structure and operating processes. Clearly articulating and documenting *Member Roles and Responsibilities* for Council Co-chairs, Committee Chairs and members will promote effective representation, set clear expectations and foster active participation. The *Work Plan* will engender discussion and agreement about the most important topics for ELAC’s deliberation, and the time and intention to engage members and stakeholders.

Creating these guiding documents early in the process of re-visioning ELAC can foster ownership and build momentum. The guiding documents also will serve as the basis for a transitional retreat that will mark the shift from the old way of working to the new structures, roles and processes.

**Implementation steps.** Create the ELAC Guiding Documents. Create an initial *Work Plan* as an early action, even before the State and Local Coordination Project recommendations are adopted. Conduct a transition retreat with the objective that ELAC members, agency leaders and key staff are each prepared to play their role in the transition to their new roles and operating processes immediately following the retreat.

***Task 1 - Create an Ad Hoc Transition Committee.***

- DEL and ELAC establish an ELAC Transition Committee to develop

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <p>1. Build Relationships and Agreements</p>   |
| <p><b>Related Implementation</b></p>  |

the guiding documents and support the transition. A seven-member committee is recommended consisting of two representatives from ELAC, two Early Learning Regional Coalition, one from DEL, one from Thrive by Five and one from OSPI.

**Task 2 - Create initial ELAC Work Plan – Early Action.**

- DEL prepares a list of initial issues/tasks, including the timeline and desired advice and recommendations, for ELAC’s first *Work Plan*, in consultation with the partnership.
- DEL asks for comment, input and additional ideas from ELAC and the coalitions.
- ELAC considers the potential *Work Plan* items and committees needed to execute the work, and the appropriate level of stakeholder engagement for each work plan item, and provides feedback to DEL.
- ELAC considers and recommends state-level committees and initiatives with which ELAC should be connected, the purposes for the connection, and the form of connection, such as shared members, liaisons, and briefings.
- ELAC considers and recommends issues and initiatives in addition to those in the work plan, for which ELAC needs to be knowledgeable and up-to-date to fulfill its functions of informing decisions in meaningful ways; and promoting joint actions that cross-sector partners can take to improve services.
- ELAC and DEL should mutually agree on the *ELAC Work Plan*. If other agencies are involved in the plans, they should mutually agree with DEL and ELAC on that part of the work plan.
- Create committees and committee charters as needed to execute the work plan, paying careful attention to creating early successes.
- At the outset of planning for the second annual ELAC work plan, ELAC should reflect upon what went well in the prior year and what could be improved upon. This should be considered in developing the second annual work plan, which may include refinement of the guiding documents and operating processes. In addition, the Executive Committee should prepare and recommend to ELAC key considerations for adoption of subsequent work plans.

**Capacity Needs**

On-going staffing will be needed. Additional short-term consultation and facilitation will be needed

**Time Frame**

Near-Term for Work Plan.  
 Mid- Term for Charter, Roles & Responsibilities, Committee Charter and New Member Orientation.  
 Mid-Term (7/13) for Transition Retreat.  
 Long-term for the second annual work plan.

**Task 3 - Develop the Council Charter, Ground Rules, Member Roles and Responsibilities.**

- The Transition Committee works with DEL and ELAC to confirm the purposes, content and uses of the guiding documents.
- The Transition Committee drafts the *ELAC Charter, Committee Charter Template, and Member Roles and Responsibilities* for ELAC’s discussion and recommendation, and DEL approval.
- ELAC adopts and DEL confirms the *Charter, Committee Charter Template, and Member Roles and Responsibilities*.

**Task 4. Create the New Member Orientation Process**

- The Transition Committee reviews and confirms the new member orientation process recommendations.
- The Transition Committee drafts a recommended orientation process and items to be included in the new ELAC Member Handbook.
- ELAC and DEL confirm the process and handbook elements. The ELAC staff team prepares the handbooks, and plans and staffs the orientation process for new members and Regional Advisors.

**Task 5 - Hold a Transition Retreat**

- Identify the timeframe and a facilitator for the retreat.
- Ten weeks in advance of the retreat, schedule the date and begin planning. Identify three to four people from the Transition Committee, including DEL staff, to work with the facilitator to propose objectives for the retreat to ELAC and to DEL.
- After the retreat objectives are approved, the facilitator and the Retreat Planning Group will work with the Transition Committee and DEL to prepare the retreat plan and materials.
- Hold the retreat.

**Task 6 - Institute strengthened functions and processes**

- Elect the co-chairs, if not done at the retreat.
- Identify the ELAC ad hoc and standing committees needed to execute the work plan. Create committee charters.
- Identify committee chairs and members who can best carry out the roles and responsibilities.

**Supporting documents and processes**

- **The ELAC Charter** should include: ELAC's purposes; advisory relationships; leadership and member roles; decision making processes; committee structure and roles; and operating procedures, such as the setting of work plans and agendas; establishing committees; and establishing liaisons between ELAC and key related initiatives and groups.
- The **Committee Charter Template** should include: the committee purpose; roles of committee chair and members (as well as desirable expertise and demographic representation); requirements and or parameters (such as the product or recommendation that will result from the committee's work); the timeline; and the staffing that available to the committee.
- **Member Roles and Responsibilities** should include the roles and responsibilities of the co-chairs, committee chairs and members. Examples might include a shared commitment:
  - a. To the Early Learning Plan's vision of "accessible, accountable and developmentally and culturally appropriate" system that "partners with families to ensure that every child is healthy, capable and confident in school and in life."
  - b. To be conduits of two-way communications.
  - c. To represent the perspectives of constituencies and sectors rather than their own or their organization's interests.
  - d. To work together to promote alignment of private and public sector actions, objectives, and resources so that Washington's early learning system affords children and families access to what they need when and where they need it.

- ***The Initial ELAC Work Plan*** should describe: the tasks, timelines, desired results, leads and partners. The work plan should have a one- to two-year time frame, as best fits the time horizon of the tasks. The work plan should include sections for: other topics upon which ELAC needs ongoing information and/or briefings; the state-level committees and initiatives to which ELAC will be connected, and the purposes and form of those connections. ELAC should review and revise the work plan annually. ELAC and DEL should mutually agree upon the *ELAC Work Plan*. As the Regional Advisors from the Regional Coalitions join ELAC, consideration should be given to adding additional topics to the *Work Plan*. For topics where other state agencies are seeking ELAC's advice, those agencies should approve relevant sections of the *Work Plan*.
- ***ELAC Connections with Related State-level Committees and Initiatives.***

**Cost and staffing implications.** Creating and adopting the guiding documents by June 2013 will require focused staffing, writing and facilitation. The State and Local Coordination Project consultant team will provide this support with funds available for this purpose through the federal State Advisory Council grant.

DEL should engage a facilitator to help plan and facilitate the transition retreat. Doing so will bring additional time and expertise to planning and structuring the event, and will help ELAC, agency leaders and staff in achieving the retreat objectives. In addition, the members of the Transition Committee, including DEL staff, should participate in two to three retreat planning meetings.

Other staff costs will be similar to planning for an intensive ELAC meeting, so no additional staff time is required. Meetings costs will be similar to a regular ELAC meeting. The retreat should take place at the June 2013 ELAC meeting. Facilitation will be an additional expense to come from the State Advisory Council grant.

**Schedule.** Mid-term for the Guiding Documents and Transition Retreat. DEL and ELAC should complete the above steps by July 2013 so that the transition to the new roles, structures and processes can take place as soon as possible. This time frame will maintain momentum, and enable the State and Local Coordination Project consultant team to assist with transition staffing and developing the guiding documents while federal grant funds are available.

Long-Term for the Second annual work plan.

### ***Implementation of Recommendation 8. Expand ELAC membership***

Bolstering ELAC's function as the primary state-local coordination mechanism is core to improving state and local coordination, and ultimately results for children. For this reason, ELAC's membership should be expanded to include representatives from each of the Early Learning Regional Coalition, connections with statewide networks and associations should be fortified through other members' affiliations.

As an interim measures, Regional Coalition representatives should join ELAC as "Regional Advisors" in time to for them to participate in the Transition Retreat. The new process for nominations and appointments should be implemented to fill all upcoming positions, as allowed by existing law. A maximum term of two years should be considered for these positions, consistent with member terms, in the eventuality that the authorizing language is not amended within the two-year period. If this occurs,

it is recommended that the Regional Coalitions be asked to identify new Regional Advisors or reconfirm the existing individuals.

Expanding ELAC’s membership will require amending ELAC’s authorizing language. When drafting the amendment, DEL should consider both expansion of ELAC membership and further delineation of roles. The Early Learning Partnership should also consider the amendment, as these agencies may also request the Council’s advice.

**Implementation steps.** DEL, Thrive and the 10 coalitions consult about the potential for supporting Early Learning Regional Coalition representatives to participate in ELAC in an interim “Regional Advisor” role.

*Action Steps:*

**Task 1 - Define the interim “Regional Advisor” role and the support needed.**

- The Transition Committee crafts the “Regional Advisor” roles and responsibilities, including a communications protocol for two-way information sharing as part of the development of the guiding documents. Then, solicit comments from their coalitions. Consider and incorporate comments and prepare a recommended protocol for ELAC adoption.
- Public and private funding partners work with the Coalitions to identify and provide technical and financial support necessary to allow Coalitions to participate in ELAC and for related capacity building.

**Task 2 - Invite coalitions to identify a Regional Advisor to participate in ELAC.**

- DEL and ELAC invite each of the 10 Early Learning Regional Coalitions to designate a representative to serve as an interim ELAC “Regional Advisor” in time to participate in the ELAC transition event.

**Task 3 - Use the recommended nominations and appointments process to identify new members as terms for existing members expire.**

- For terms that conclude on June 30, 2013, solicit nominations from appropriate groups and networks, as noted on the *List of Recommended ELAC Members and Affiliations* included in the Recommendations section.

**Task 4 - Amend ELAC Authorizing Legislation to expand membership and further specify ELAC’s roles.**

- DEL and ELAC consider recommended roles and membership expansion.
- Decide on roles and members to request in amended legislation. Consider requesting authority for immediate implementation so as to add new members sooner.
- Amend legislation and implement changes.

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <p>1. Build Relationships and Agreements.</p>  |
| <p><b>Related Implementation</b></p>    |
| <p><b>Capacity Needs</b></p> <p>Additional funding to support new regional advisor/member travel &amp; per diem costs will be needed</p>   |
| <p><b>Time Frame</b></p> <p>Near-Term for Regional Advisors.</p> <p>Mid-Term for Regional Advisor Communication Protocol.</p> <p>2014 for Amendment of Authorizing Legislation</p> |

**Cost and staffing implications.** There would be a small incremental cost for adding Regional Advisors and new members, related to the increase in the number of ELAC participants. The modest increased costs would result from travel and per diem costs for interim Regional Advisors and new members to attend six ELAC meetings and six committee meetings per year. Capacity-building costs are included in the steps for implementing the Early Learning Regional Coalition changes, in the next section of this *Implementation Plan*.

**Schedule. Near-term.** Identify Regional Advisors or new members in the near-term, so that they can participate in a June ELAC retreat, marking the transition to the new roles, structures and processes in June 2013.

**Mid-term.** Solicit coalition input on the Regional Advisor Communication Protocol, and finalize the protocol. This is suggested so that the Regional Advisors can be involved in soliciting comments and finalizing the protocols.

### Early Learning Regional Coalitions Implementation Plan

**Overview.** The State and Local Coordination Project recommendations suggest strengthening the regional work that has been done to date by the Infant-Toddler Regions and the Early Learning Regional Coalitions. The coalitions are in the process of integrating their efforts and building their capacity to coordinate local early learning efforts. While the specific recommendations relate to actions the regions can take to build this new structure for joint state and local action, ELAC and the Washington Early Learning Partnership will be undertaking related and interdependent work in tandem. Their steps are noted in the prior sections of this *Implementation Plan*. Since DEL Infant Toddler and Thrive Community Momentum grants have supported all regions’ early elements of this work, many important elements are already in place or developing. Implementing these recommendations will require regional assessment of existing capacity and putting enhancements in place based upon new roles. Some of these revisions may require additional resources, notably for strengthening outreach and engagement capacity.

#### ***Implementation of Recommendation 9. Strengthen Regional Coalitions.***

**Implementation steps.** Coalitions have many successful elements on which to build. The following steps suggest necessary strengthening to ensure the ongoing ability of the coalition to participate in joint early learning action. Many of these tasks are already part of the recent Community Momentum grants. However, technical assistance plans for individual Regional Coalitions may need to be revised to help coalitions to achieve all of these articulated capacity-building elements. Additionally, state partners will need to be sensitive and responsive to the need for temporary or permanent funding that is part of strengthening.

*Action Steps:*

**Task 1. Work with state-level partners to create a stable funding source for coalition capacity.**

- DEL, Thrive by Five Washington and other partners work with Regional

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <p>1. Build Relationships and Agreements &amp; Consider Stakeholder Input</p> |
| <p><b>Related Implementation:</b></p> <p>None</p>   |
| <p><b>Capacity Needs:</b></p> <p>Continued funding to maintain</p>                                    |

Coalitions to identify and secure long-range funding for basic coalition capacity as well as “developmental” funding for those regions that are still developing important parts of their infrastructure.

- Each Regional Coalition discusses elements of regional infrastructure and initiatives for which they will jointly seek sustaining funding as distinct from independent organization fund development.

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| individual coalition capacity will be needed |
| <b>Time Frame:</b><br>Near-Term and Mid-Term |

**Task 2. Establish a well-understood and accepted regional governance structure.**

- Each Regional Coalition completes integration of Infant Toddler Region Steering Committee and other “initiative work,” articulating committee structures and executive functions for the coalition.
- Each Regional Coalition names the authority, responsibility and relationships among its Coordinator, leadership structure, committees, point people, members and other stakeholders.
- Each Regional Coalition negotiates and documents the process it will use to make regional coordination decisions, noting types of issues to be addressed, opportunities for input, consultation required, steps in making decisions and distribution of work.
- Each Regional Coalition negotiates and agrees on the reasons for their collaboration, naming goals and commitments in the form of a charter, bylaws or other document.
- Each Regional Coalition establishes a process for storing and making available minutes, agreements and plans documenting its decisions and planned action.
- Each Regional Coalition establishes a process that can allow local input to be gathered for setting agendas, notifying partners of decisions to be made, and briefing regional representatives on local and topical needs, ideas and decisions.

**Task 3. Ensure skilled and credible leadership.**

- Each Regional Coalition assesses the level of staffing and leadership structure oversight it needs to ensure effective collaboration and dedicate adequate resources to ensure consistency.
- Each Regional Coalition defines the knowledge, skills and attributes that a Regional Coordinator, leadership team members and the regional ELAC representative need to: represent the coalition effectively; foster effective working relationships; and drive collaborative action.
- Each Regional Coalition cultivates, selects and develops these skills among candidates for coalition leadership positions.

**Task 4. Ensure credibility, relevance, and needed expertise and infrastructure.**

- Periodically reflect on the health, progress and effectiveness of the coalition, its processes and actions.
- Each Regional Coalition establishes capacity, and cultivates members or other partners who can support the use of anecdotal and quantitative data to support decisions.
- Each Regional Coalition establishes a process for regional members to remain abreast of regional and state policy-making processes and priorities.

**Supporting documents and processes**

- **Characteristics of Effective Coalitions** – This document can serve as a guide for determining strength and capacity of the Regional Coalition, detailing what will be possible when coalitions create their unique infrastructures.
- **Guiding Document(s)** – This formalization of goals and operational agreements will help maintain focus, build trust and allow members to hold each other accountable.
- **Governance Structure and Decision-Making Process** – This visual or written document explains who is accountable for what types of decisions (and at what levels), and how the coalition will prioritize decisions. It also helps members and others to know how an issue will proceed from proposal through input process to deliberation and decision.

**Cost and staffing implications.** Regions have built capacity over the past several years through Infant Toddler funding and Community Momentum grants for the Early Learning Regional Coalitions. In most cases, coalition members currently contribute funding or in-kind support to ensure that the region has adequate capacity to succeed. While many of the implementation steps above are not new to the Regional Coalitions, many coalitions have a need to strengthen capacity and formalize structures that they have developed. Doing so will require careful consideration of the additional amount of staffing capacity and associated costs that will be needed.

**Schedule.** To be able to represent regional interests effectively in the new state-local coordination structure, all regions will need to ensure that these elements are in place quickly. Coalitions will be able to implement quickly (in the “near-term”) many of the recommendations above, such as articulation of governance structures, guiding documents and decision protocols. Other recommendations (such as recruiting technical expertise and securing long-term funding) they may complete in the “mid-term.” Regional Coalitions are already in the process of implementing many of these changes, so timing does not currently depend on the timeframe for adopting the recommendations or the implementation efforts of ELAC or the Early Learning Partnership.

**Implementation of Recommendation 10. Increase engagement of diverse stakeholders**

**Implementation steps.** While all Early Learning Regional Coalitions have had some experience with efforts to engage diverse cultural communities, community influencers and the general public, sustained effort has historically been a challenge. In many instances, Regional Coalitions have requested technical support to strengthen their cultivation skill and increase engagement support to help “graduate” supporters to deeper engagement over time. ELAC, DEL and Thrive by Five Washington can be particularly helpful in securing technical assistance and helping each region to build on capacity in other regions or at the state level (such as strengthening the engagement of state-level advocacy organization support to Regional Coalitions.)

*Action Steps:*

**Task 1. Articulate ways, in addition to membership, that parents, businesses, elected officials, and other interested parties can share their voice and affiliate**

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <p>3. Choose Strategies and Priorities;</p> <p>4. Ensure Funding and Policy Support;</p> <p>6. Build Public Understanding and Will</p> |
| <p><b>Related Implementation:</b></p>                                     |
| <p><b>Capacity Needs:</b></p> <p>Additional</p>  |

**with the coalition.**

- Each Regional Coalition carefully considers the different types of involvement they need and desire in coalition business, and names specific ways for people to be involved, including:
  - Articulating different levels of consultation and engagement to ensure that regional decisions balance stakeholder interest and the need for swift decision-making (see *Types of Stakeholder Engagement* under Recommendation #1 in the Recommendations section).
  - Naming roles for “supporters” (such as parents, business leaders and elected leaders) who want to champion the coalition’s work but not be engaged in regular coalition meetings as members.
  - Naming roles for “partners” who may be part of other coalitions or collaborative efforts and want to advance toward common aims while maintaining their own effort.
  - Naming increased opportunity and responsibility that comes with “membership.”

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| funding to support more of a Coordinator’s time and deep other expertise and capacity will be needed |
| <b>Time Frame:</b><br>Mid-Term & Long-Term   |

**Task 2. Engage communities of color in regional initiatives.**

- Each Regional Coalition plans processes to connect coalition decision makers with members of communities of color.
- Each Regional Coalition intentionally reaches out and engages communities of color. To remove potential barriers, the coalition will meet in convenient community gathering places, provide interpretation services, and use varied solutions to promote access.

**Task 3. Engage other communities that are far from opportunity.**

- Each Regional Coalition plans processes to connect coalition decision makers with those furthest from opportunity.
- Each Regional Coalition intentionally reaches out and engages members of communities furthest from opportunity. Actions might include using meeting in places convenient to them, providing interpretation services and using varied solutions to promote access.

**Task 4. Engage people who make and influence decisions in the breadth of program areas that make up the region's early learning system.**

- Each Regional Coalition ensures that coalition membership and partnerships include a mix of cross-sector partners who understand and influence different elements of the early learning system.
- Each Regional Coalition considers and cultivates the types of community stakeholders that need to be part of coalition governance to move a regional early learning agenda, and how the stakeholders should be involved in the coalition.
- Each Regional Coalition identifies ways to build and maintain ongoing relationships with elected leaders, keeping them apprised of regional needs, priorities and policy agenda.

**Task 5. Raise public awareness of and participation in regional and state initiatives (such as Infant Toddler support, Early Achievers, WaKIDS, Love.Talk.Play., etc.).**

- Each Regional Coalition plans and implements communications and community engagement strategies that raise the profile of regional and state initiatives, and connect families and professionals to the next step in using/supporting the regional early learning system.

**Supporting documents and processes**

- **Membership and Engagement Framework** – This document articulates the ways that people and organizations can affiliate with the Early Learning Regional Coalition, naming opportunities for input, responsibilities and what is desired as supporters move to deeper levels of engagement (see *Sample Types of Stakeholder Engagement* in the Recommendations section for starter dough.)
- **Membership Process, Rights and Responsibilities** – This section of the Regional Coalition Charter or Bylaws articulates how people and/or organizations become members, and their rights and responsibilities.

**Cost and staffing implications.** Coalitions have involved stakeholders for several years. However, engaging the diverse types of stakeholders recommended will require more dedicated capacity to reach parents, cultural communities and geographically remote communities. Those processes also differ substantially from the capacity needed to cultivate and engage business, funding and policymaking stakeholders. Regional Coalitions will differ in their need for technical advice and logistical support to implement these recommendations. Some regions may be able to access these new capacities and skills through in-kind support from local funders, advocacy organizations and other partners or from state-level organizations. However, most will need an additional portion of an FTE as “capacity,” and many will need to secure technical support to strengthen their efforts in cultivating and engaging this broader set of partners.

**Schedule.** Most coalitions have been implementing elements of this work for several years through their Infant Toddler and Regional Coalition work. However, engaging large numbers of parents and other community leaders takes thoughtful consideration, as well as strengthening of capacity. These recommendations assume coalitions can clarify membership and partnership options, and articulate community input mechanisms within six months (mid-term), while deep engagement and mobilization of a variety of champions will require long-term effort.

**Implementation of Recommendation 11. Strengthen joint local, regional and state action**

**Implementation steps.** Implementing this recommendation depends on creating the processes to focus the energy and action of each Early Learning Regional Coalition. Most Regional Coalitions have elements of the implementation tasks in place, but each will need to review and refine their current process in relation to changes at the regional level and comparable processes the state level is adopting.

*Action Steps:*

**Task 1. Ensure a transparent, effective and aligned process for agenda setting.**

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| <p><b>Function:</b></p> <p>3. Choose Strategies and Priorities;</p> <p>5. Implement and Expand Services and Programs;</p> <p>7. Be Accountable for</p> |
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- Each Regional Coalition creates a predictable and easily accessible way for local and regional members and partners to raise issues, share promising practices and nominate priorities to the Regional Coalition table for consideration.
- Each coalition reviews and comments on the basic ELAC Regional Advisor Roles and Communication Protocols. Coalitions consider and add roles specific to their coalition to the ELAC Regional Advisor Position Description that will help them best leverage this role to facilitate joint action.
- Each Regional Coalition identifies and uses a process for raising issues, sharing promising practices and nominating priorities to the state level.

**Task 2. Implement prioritized strategies through use of an *Action Plan*.**

- Each Regional Coalition creates a simple *Action Plan* noting: regional priorities; joint state and regional priorities; implementation strategies; connections to local and state efforts; timeline; accountable parties; and success measures.
- Each Regional Coalition uses the *Action Plan* to drive regional action to improve services for children and families and assess progress of regional coordination efforts.
- Each Regional Coalition focuses additional effort on closing the opportunity gap.

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| Achieving Outcomes   |
| <p><b>Related Implementation:</b></p>         |
| <p><b>Capacity Need:</b></p> <p>Additional funding to purchase more coordinator time and technical assistance will be needed</p> |
| <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p>Near-Term, &amp; Mid-Term</p>   |

**Task 3. Select and support a regional advisor to participate in the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC).**

- Each Regional Coalition works with public and private funding partners to identify and secure technical and financial support necessary to allow coalitions to participate in ELAC and for related capacity building.
- Each Regional Coalition selects a Regional Advisor to ELAC who has a broad knowledge of the coalition’s work.

**Task 4. Promote use of statewide performance goals to assess how well we are doing in coordinating action and delivering results.**

- Each Regional Coalition participates in the adopted statewide process for selecting, using and revising “Performance Measures” to promote continuous improvement of local, regional and state early learning systems.
- Each Regional Coalition uses the “Performance Measures” as a guide to set some regional priorities and identify potential system improvements.

**Task 5. Establish/strengthen advocacy capacity.**

- Each Regional Coalition develops local capacity (for example, policy point people) to follow policymaking processes and mobilize local people to advocate for regional priorities.
- Each Regional Coalition develops partnerships with statewide advocacy organizations that can help to advance regional and state priorities, and bolster regional advocacy capacity.

**Supporting documents and processes**

- **Online Document Storage** – These free, web-based tools allow Regional Coalitions to store important guiding and working documents, and provide appropriate security-level access to members and other stakeholders in an efficient manner.
- **Action Plan** – This document should be simple enough to be easily understood by Regional Coalition members, but detailed enough to identify what is being done, by whom, over what time and for what intended result.
- **Performance Measure Setting Process** – A draft of this process, included in this final report, will go to ELAC for discussion before adoption. It outlines opportunities for input into what the most beneficial “elevation” of performance measures can be, and how they can best help to foster mutually-reinforcing action.

**Cost and staffing implications.** Most of the implementation steps noted above are already part of current coalition capacity-building plans and of the existing Community Momentum grant budget. However, coalitions may need additional in-kind or paid support (more coordinator time) to build and sustain effective regional advocacy capacity. Individual coalitions may also need in-kind or paid advocacy technical assistance.

**Schedule.** Many of the implementation steps are already in place for some coalitions, while others are just developing them. Establishing agenda-setting processes, action planning and establishing relationships with advocacy organizations are likely to be done quickly and are noted as near-term priorities. Actual development of the *Action Plan* is likely in the mid-term. Additionally, coalition participation in the “Performance Measures” process depends upon the state timeline, which will likely take up to six months to develop (mid-term).

**Table 14. Implementation Budget Overview**

| Recommendation   | Funding Needs   | Staffing Needs   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Overarching Recommendations</b>                                     |   |  |
| 1. Adopt stakeholder engagement framework                              | Possible additional funding for periodic facilitation and outreach activities   | Staff to develop project plan<br>Staff for communications strategy for each engagement effort<br>Possible consultant assistance for engagement |
| 2. Adopt performance goals and indicators                              | Possible additional funding to assist in preparation and adoption of performance goals at regional and state levels             | Staff or consultant to manage process of developing preliminary list, drafting recommendations and working with ELAC committee                 |
| <b>Washington Early Learning Partnership</b>                           |   |  |
| 3. Invite DOH and DSHS to join Washington Early Learning Partnership   | Continued funding for facilitation  | Continued staff participation from partnership agencies  |
| 4. Create annual priorities and develop consultation process with ELAC | None  | Staff to draft proposed schedule and process, and manage review process  |
| 5. Enhance communication between WELP and regional/local partners      | None  | Communication staff to create template for calendar of activities, post resulting schedule online, and update quarterly                        |
| <b>Early Learning Advisory Council</b>                                 |   |  |
| 6. Strengthen ELAC's function in the early learning system             | None for planning<br>Funding for ongoing ELAC staffing and operations   | No new staff initially<br>1.5 FTE ongoing to staff ELAC  |
| 7. Clarify how ELAC will carry out more focused functions              | Transition Retreat facilitation and costs (SAC grant)<br>Meeting costs, as for current ELAC meetings                            | Staff or consultant to create and facilitate adopting guiding documents.<br>Facilitator to plan and facilitate Transition Retreat              |
| 8. Expand ELAC membership  | Incremental cost to add additional members to ELAC<br>Travel and per diem costs for new members                                 | No additional staff needs  |
| <b>Early Learning Regional Coalitions</b>                              |   |  |
| 9. Strengthen Regional Coalitions                                      | Continued, or possibly expanded, level of funding for coalition capacity; to be determined/negotiated with Regional Coalitions  | Continued, or possibly expanded, level of individual coalition staffing capacity   |
| 10. Increase engagement of diverse stakeholders                        | Additional funding for more Coordinator time/capacity<br>Possible technical assistance about engagement of diverse stakeholders | Additional coalition Coordinator capacity  |
| 11. Strengthen joint local-regional-state action                       | Additional funding for more Coordinator time/capacity<br>Possible technical assistance to strengthen advocacy                   | Additional coalition Coordinator capacity  |

**Table 15. Draft Partnership Implementation Budget**

|                                | Line Item                              | Budget          | Comments   |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| <b>Regional Infrastructure</b> |  |                 |  |
| A.                             | Personnel (State Partners)             | \$0             |  |
|                                |  | \$0             | Assumes no additional cost for participation of staff from partnership agencies. |
| B.                             | Partnership Meeting & Operation        | \$20,000        |  |
|                                | Travel                                 | \$0             |  |
|                                | Meeting Expenses                       | \$0             | Assumes all meeting space will be donated  |
|                                | Meeting facilitation/technical support | \$20,000        | Currently \$20,000/year. Assumes continued current level of effort and cost.     |
|                                | <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>\$20,000</b> |  |

DRAFT

**Table 16. Draft ELAC Implementation Budget**

|             | Line Item                            | Budget           | Comments  |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| <b>ELAC</b> |                                      |                  |   |
| <b>A.</b>   | <b>Personnel</b>                     | <b>\$176,528</b> |   |
|             | 1 FTE Governance Administrator WMS 2 | \$89,284         | Includes salary and benefits. This position will support DEL and ELAC in planning, coordinating, and implementing Council work plan, activities, recommendations, work in close coordination with the DEL Leadership Team, develop and maintain partnerships and facilitate stakeholder involvement and development and review of performance goals |
|             | .5FTE Administrative Assistant 4     | \$32,419         | Includes salary and benefits. This position will provide administrative support for ELAC and the Governance Administrator   |
|             | Supplies                             | \$2,400          | Estimated at SAC grant level  |
|             | Travel                               | \$4,500          | Out -of- town meetings, e.g., travel to Coalition meetings and stakeholder engagement. Estimated at SAC grant level.  |
|             | Telecommunication                    | \$948            | Annual cost of GoToWebinar for up to 100 participants (includes GoToMeeting   |
|             | Indirect                             | \$46,977.36      | Calculated at 38.6 percent of salaries and benefits   |
| <b>B.</b>   | <b>Council Operations</b>            | <b>\$23,523</b>  |   |
|             | Meeting Rooms                        | \$1,080          | Average cost per meeting of \$180 per meeting x six meetings/year   |
|             | Travel & Meals                       | \$22,443         | Includes member/Regional Advisor travel and meals, including meeting meals for 6 meetings per year. Average cost of \$1,317/per meeting increased to include 12 additional members from across the state x 6 meetings/year. New average cost per meeting is \$3,773.  |
| <b>C.</b>   | <b>Council Strengthening</b>         | <b>\$5,000</b>   |   |
|             | Guiding Document Development         | \$0              | NA, will come from SAC grant  |
|             | Stakeholder Engagement               | \$5,000          | Estimated for translation, interpretation, telecommunication, meeting costs and parent stipends   |
|             | <b>TOTAL</b>                         | <b>\$205,051</b> |   |

**Note:** An implementation budget for supporting the **Regional Coalitions** will be developed in consultation with the partnership agencies and the regional coalitions.

## Appendix A:

### Early Learning Advisory Council – Authorizing Legislation

#### RCW 43.215.090

##### Early learning advisory council — Statewide early learning plan.

- (1) The early learning advisory council is established to advise the department on statewide early learning issues that would build a comprehensive system of quality early learning programs and services for Washington's children and families by assessing needs and the availability of services, aligning resources, developing plans for data collection and professional development of early childhood educators, and establishing key performance measures.
- (2) The council shall work in conjunction with the department to develop a statewide early learning plan that guides the department in promoting alignment of private and public sector actions, objectives, and resources, and ensuring school readiness.
- (3) The council shall include diverse, statewide representation from public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. Its membership shall reflect regional, racial, and cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the state.
- (4) Council members shall serve two-year terms. However, to stagger the terms of the council, the initial appointments for twelve of the members shall be for one year. Once the initial one-year to two-year terms expire, all subsequent terms shall be for two years, with the terms expiring on June 30th of the applicable year. The terms shall be staggered in such a way that, where possible, the terms of members representing a specific group do not expire simultaneously.
- (5) The council shall consist of not more than twenty-three members, as follows:
  - a. The governor shall appoint at least one representative from each of the following: The department, the office of financial management, the department of social and health services, the department of health, the student achievement council, and the state board for community and technical colleges;
  - b. One representative from the office of the superintendent of public instruction, to be appointed by the superintendent of public instruction;
  - c. The governor shall appoint seven leaders in early childhood education, with at least one representative with experience or expertise in one or more of the areas such as the following: The K-12 system, family day care providers, and child care centers with four of the seven governor's appointees made as follows:
    - i. The head start state collaboration office director or the director's designee;
    - ii. A representative of a head start, early head start, migrant/seasonal head start, or tribal head start program;
    - iii. A representative of a local education agency; and
    - iv. A representative of the state agency responsible for programs under section 619 or part C of the federal individuals with disabilities education act;
  - d. Two members of the house of representatives, one from each caucus, and two members of the senate, one from each caucus, to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate, respectively;

- e. Two parents, one of whom serves on the department's parent advisory group, to be appointed by the governor;
  - f. One representative of the private-public partnership created in RCW [43.215.070](#), to be appointed by the partnership board;
  - g. One representative designated by sovereign tribal governments; and
  - h. One representative from the Washington federation of independent schools.
- (6) The council shall be cochaired by one representative of a state agency and one nongovernmental member, to be elected by the council for two-year terms.
- (7) The council shall appoint two members and stakeholders with expertise in early learning to sit on the technical working group created in section 2, chapter 234, Laws of 2010.
- (8) Each member of the board shall be compensated in accordance with RCW [43.03.240](#) and reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in carrying out the duties of the board in accordance with RCW [43.03.050](#) and [43.03.060](#).
- (9) The department shall provide staff support to the council.

[2012 c 229 § 589; 2011 c 177 § 2. Prior: 2010 c 234 § 3; 2010 c 12 § 1; 2007 c 394 § 3.]

**Notes:**

**Effective date -- 2012 c 229 §§ 101, 117, 401, 402, 501 through 594, 601 through 609, 701 through 708, 801 through 821, 902, and 904:** See note following RCW [28B.77.005](#).

**Finding -- Purpose -- 2011 c 177:** "The legislature finds that to fully comply with requirements in section 642B of the federal head start act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 9837b, regarding state advisory council membership, Washington must amend existing law to reflect necessary changes in early learning advisory council membership in accordance with the federal requirement.

Accordingly, the purpose of this act is to specify four of the governor's appointees as permanent members on the early learning advisory council to comply with state advisory council requirements as follows: The head start state collaboration office director or a designee; a representative of a head start, early head start, migrant/seasonal head start, or tribal head start program; a representative of a local education agency; and a representative of the state agency responsible for programs under section 619 or part C of the federal individuals with disabilities education act. This act also revises the categories of groups from which the governor may appoint additional representatives as members of the council." [2011 c 177 § 1.]

**Intent -- 2010 c 234:** "The department of early learning, the superintendent of public instruction, and thrive by five's joint early learning recommendations to the governor, and the quality education council's January 2010 recommendations to the legislature both suggested that a voluntary program of early learning should be included within the overall program of basic education. The legislature intends to examine these recommendations and Attorney General Opinion Number 8 (2009) through the development of a working group to identify and recommend a comprehensive plan." [2010 c 234 § 1.]

**Finding -- Declaration -- Captions not law -- 2007 c 394:** See notes following RCW [43.215.010](#).

## **Appendix B:**

### **Excerpt from Reauthorized Head Start Act of 2007 – Establishing State Advisory Councils on Early Education and Care**

The Governor of the State shall--

(i) designate or establish a council to serve as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry (in this subchapter referred to as the State Advisory Council'); and

(ii) designate an individual to coordinate activities of the State Advisory Council, as described in subparagraph (D)(i).

(B) The Governor may designate an existing entity in the State to serve as the State Advisory Council, and shall appoint representatives to the State Advisory Council at the Governor's discretion. In designating an existing entity, the Governor shall take steps to ensure that its membership includes, to the extent possible, representatives consistent with subparagraph (C).

(C) Members of the State Advisory Council shall include, to the maximum extent possible--

- a representative of the State agency responsible for child care;
- a representative of the State educational agency;
- a representative of local educational agencies;
- a representative of institutions of higher education in the State;
- a representative of local providers of early childhood education and development services;
- a representative from Head Start agencies located in the State, including migrant and seasonal Head Start programs and Indian Head Start programs;
- the State Director of Head Start Collaboration;
- a representative of the State agency responsible for programs under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.);
- a representative of the State agency responsible for health or mental health care; and
- representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the Governor of the State.

(D)(i) The State Advisory Council shall, in addition to any responsibilities assigned to the Council by the Governor of the State--

- conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality pre-

kindergarten services for low-income children in the State;

- identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among Federally-funded and State-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among State agencies responsible for administering such programs;
- develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;
- develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;
- develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;
- assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or prekindergarten program; and
- make recommendations for improvements in State early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.

(ii) The State Advisory Council shall hold public hearings and provide an opportunity for public comment on the activities described in clause

- The State Advisory Council shall submit a statewide strategic report addressing the activities described in clause (i) to the State Director of Head Start Collaboration and the Governor of the State.

(iii) After submission of a statewide strategic report under clause (ii), the State Advisory Council shall meet periodically to review any implementation of the recommendations in such report and any changes in State and local needs.

(2)(A) The Secretary shall use the portion reserved under section 640(a)(4)(A)(iii) to award, on a competitive basis, one-time startup grants of not less than \$500,000 to eligible States to enable such States to pay for the Federal share of developing and implementing a plan pursuant to the responsibilities included under paragraph (1)(D)(i). A State that receives funds under this paragraph shall use such funds to facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school preparedness through one or more of the following activities—

- (i) promoting school preparedness of children from birth through school entry, including activities to encourage families and caregivers to engage in highly interactive,

- developmentally and age-appropriate activities to improve children's early social, emotional, and cognitive development, support the transition of young children to school, and foster parental and family involvement in the early education of young children;
- (ii) supporting professional development, recruitment, and retention initiatives for early childhood educators;
  - (iii) enhancing existing early childhood education and development programs and services (in existence on the date on which the grant involved is awarded), including quality improvement activities authorized under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990; and
  - (iv) carrying out other activities consistent with the State's plan and application, pursuant to subparagraph (B).

(B) To be eligible to receive a grant under this paragraph, a State shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a plan and application, for a 3-year period, at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary shall require, including—

- (i) the statewide strategic report described in paragraph (1)(D)(ii), including a description of the State Advisory Council's responsibilities under paragraph (1)(D)(i);
- (ii) a description, for each fiscal year, of how the State will make effective use of funds available under this paragraph, with funds described in subparagraph (C), to create an early childhood education and care system, by developing or enhancing programs and activities consistent with the statewide strategic report described in paragraph (1)(D)(i);
- (iii) a description of the State early learning standards and the State's goals for increasing the number of children entering kindergarten ready to learn;
- (iv) information identifying the agency or joint interagency office, and individual, designated to carry out the activities under this paragraph, which may be the individual designated under paragraph (1)(A)(ii); and
- (v) a description of how the State plans to sustain activities under this paragraph beyond the grant period.

(C) The Federal share of the cost of activities proposed to be conducted under subparagraph (A) shall be 30 percent, and the State shall provide the non-Federal share.

(D) Funds made available under this paragraph shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, other Federal, State, and local funds expended to carry out activities related to early childhood education and care in the State.

(E) Not later than 18 months after the date a State receives a grant under this paragraph, the State shall submit an interim report to the Secretary. A State that receives a grant under this paragraph shall submit a final report to the Secretary at the end of the grant period. Each report

shall include—

- (i) a description of the activities and services carried out under the grant, including the outcomes of such activities and services in meeting the needs described in the periodic needs assessment and statewide strategic report;
- (ii) information about how the State used such funds to meet the goals of this subsection through activities to develop or enhance high-quality systems of early childhood education and care, increase effectiveness of delivery systems and use of funds, and enhance existing programs and services;
- (iii) information regarding the remaining needs described in the periodic statewide needs assessment and statewide strategic report that have not yet been addressed by the State; and
- (iv) any other information that the Secretary may require.

(F) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to provide the State Advisory Council with authority to modify, supersede, or negate the requirements of this subchapter.

## **Appendix C:**

### **Guiding Principles from *Washington Early Learning Plan***

1. Be child-focused and family-centered. Promote meaningful partnerships with parents and families, since they are children’s first teachers.
2. Promote alignment of early learning services and programs as a continuum that is comprehensive, supports whole child development, and is available to all children.
3. Be flexible, culturally responsive, accessible, relevant and respectful, and reflect the needs of local communities and individual children.
4. Be developmentally appropriate and, where applicable, evidence based (as available), and address each stage of child development from prenatal through third grade.
5. Build on strengths—of children, parents, families, providers, programs, communities and prior planning efforts, such as Kids Matter and Washington Learns.
6. Develop a tiered approach to addressing the early learning needs of all children in the state, identifying those strategies that apply to all, some and few children.
7. Provide supports, services and programs for at-risk children and families to close the preparation gap.
8. Promote high-quality early learning to increase school readiness and success in school and in life.
9. Include professional development and support for early learning and care providers.
10. Promote transparency and accountability in all policies, services and programs.
11. Provide ways to measure progress over time.
12. Identify funding sources and promote adequate financing of the system.
13. Provide for meaningful stakeholder review and comment on the Washington State Early Learning Plan as it is being developed and on the system’s performance over time.

## **Appendix D: Communications and Engagement Strategy**

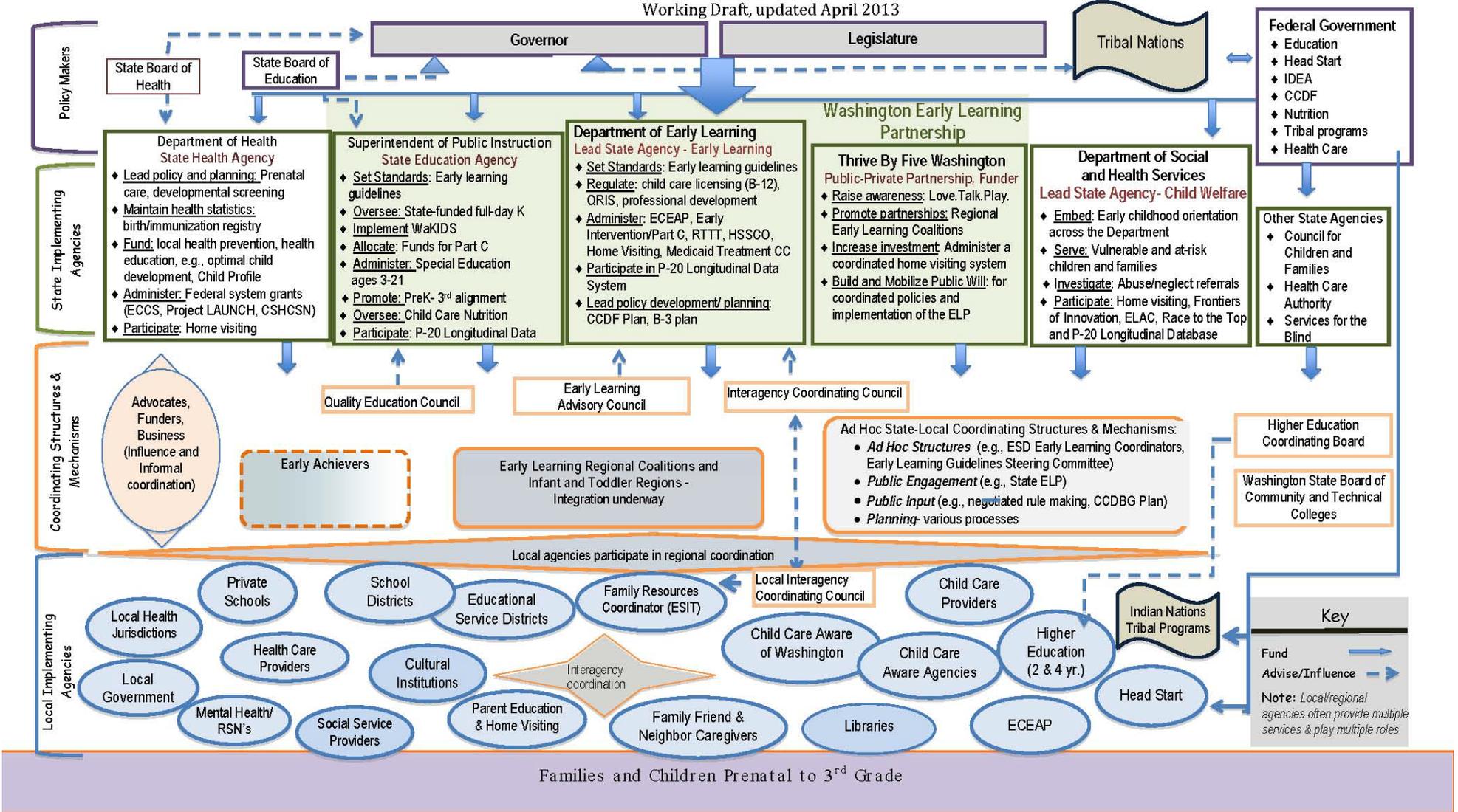
[insert strategy doc]

## **Appendix E: Current Early Learning System Governance**

See the graphic on the next page.

### Overview of State-Local Early Learning Agencies & Coordination in Washington State

Working Draft, updated April 2013



**Appendix F:  
Best Practices in State and Local Coordination –  
North Carolina, Arizona and Oklahoma**

[insert best practices research summary]

**Appendix G:  
Stakeholder Interview Questions and Summary of Interviews**

[insert interviews summary, 6/19/12]

**Appendix H:  
First Cultural Competence Review by National Equity Project**

[insert NEP's report]

**Appendix I:  
Response to Cultural Competence Review**

[insert John's 5/17/12 response memo]

**Appendix J:  
Round 1 Engagement Survey: Summary of Results**

[retitle and insert the full survey summary]

**Appendix K:  
Preliminary Recommendations (Tier 1 version)**

[insert doc]

**Appendix L:  
Preliminary Recommendations (Tier 2 version)**

[insert doc]

**Appendix M:  
Round 2 Engagement Survey: Summary of Results**

[insert full survey summary]

**Appendix N:  
Second Cultural Competence Review by National Equity Project**

[insert NEP's 1/16/13 review doc.]

## Appendix O: Comparison: Proposed Performance Goals and Existing Measures

The State and Local Project Steering Committee has recommended creation of a handful of **performance goals and indicators to help state and local partners work together and focus on the same strategic objectives and desired outcomes**. Statewide performance goals have been used effectively in other states. (See discussion paper for a thorough description of the performance goals concept.)

In Washington State the Department of Early Learning already works diligently to respond to a variety of measures, goals and metrics established by the Governor, Legislature, program grants, and other sources. This raises an important question: How would the suggested performance goals be different than the other tools already in place?

**Why do we need a new type of performance goal?** As described in the concept paper, the proposed performance goals will:

- Focus the joint efforts of state and local early learning partners, rather than solely on the efforts of state agency performance;
- Create consensus and momentum among state and local partners through a collaborative process between DEL, ELAC and the Early Learning Coalitions, to create the performance goals; and,
- Be consistent with other state work plans or objectives, since the performance goals could be a combination of existing goals/targets already established and new goals.

**How is this different than existing goals and metrics?** The table on the following page describes three documents/processes that provide guidance for DEL's work:

*The Government, Management, Accountability and Performance Goals (GMAP)* - The GMAP measures provide a selective set of standards that DEL reports on quarterly, and are more focused on the licensing function that DEL performs.

*The Washington Early Learning Partnership Annual Priorities (agreed upon by DEL, OSPI, and Thrive by Five Washington)* - The Partnership Annual priorities reflect the strategic priorities for the three partner entities (DEL, OSPI, and Thrive), but they reflect an annual work plan as opposed to definitive statements about desired outcomes.

*Race to the Top, and excerpts from the successful Race to the Top federal grant* - The Race to the Top grant includes numerous targets and measures that the state has agreed to accomplish. These come closest to the kind of statements and metrics that would be included in annual performance goals.

In addition, DEL monitors and reports on twenty three *Early Learning Plan Indicators*. The indicators are a set of metrics (like vital signs) that help to describe the well-being and development of young children over time. However, the Indicators do not describe desired outcomes or shared goals for state and local partners.

## Comparison of Selected Measures for the Department of Early Learning

| GMap Dashboard Measures<br>(Excerpts from November Report)  | Washington Early Learning<br>Partnership Annual Priorities (Sample<br>of 2012 Priorities)  | Race to the Top Application<br>(Sample Goals)   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Timely Monitoring Visits in Licensed Facilities</b><br/>Target-85%, Actual-80%<br/>November Notes: % of visits conducted on time decreased over the last quarter from 87% to 80%. Factors leading to the decline are being addressed.</p>   | <p><b>Improve Pre-School Access &amp; Outcomes (Early Learning Plan Strategy #13)</b><br/>2012 Action Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce legislation to implement Work Group's recommendations</li> <li>• Legislature passes legislation; funding to begin to implement</li> <li>• Steps to begin Phase I completed, including development of program standards, completion of facility study and issuance of RFP to potential providers.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Expand Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TORIS) to promote quality &amp; improve access for high-needs children</b><br/>Annual targets and Goals for 2012 - 2015.<br/><u>TORIS 2015 Targets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54% of all programs in levels 2-5</li> <li>• 60% of licensed child care centers in TORIS levels 2-5</li> <li>• 50% of licensed family child care homes in TORIS levels 2-5</li> <li>• 73% of Head Start/ECEAP programs in TORIS levels 3-5.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Timely Licensing Complaint Inspections</b><br/>Target-45 days, Actual-39 days<br/>November Notes: DEL continues to meet their target. Data are for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of FY12.</p>  |  |   |
| <p><b>Initial Complaint Response</b><br/>Target-85%, Actual-93%<br/>November Notes: This was a new measure for the May 2012 Forum. Data are for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of FY12.</p>   | <p><b>Implement Comprehensive Prof. Development and Compensation System (ELP Strategy #23)</b><br/>2012 Action Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainer approval board established</li> <li>• Trainers apply for state approval through MERIT</li> <li>• Establish DEL/OSPI planning team to look at intersection of new trainer approval process and the K-12 system</li> <li>• Trainer modules implemented and required for state-approved trainers</li> <li>• Create communities of learning for executive function practice review</li> <li>• Career lattice embedded in MERIT</li> <li>• Strengthen higher ed partnership</li> <li>• Prepare to launch Professional Development Incentives,</li> </ul> | <p><u>TORIS 2015 Targets for Children Served</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% of children served are in TORIS levels 2-5.</li> <li>• 62% of high need children served are in TORIS levels 2-5</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>State-Funded Preschool Enrollment</b><br/>Target-100%, Actual 108%<br/>November Notes: Average of 8,455 children enrolled in 8,391 ECEAP slots. Enrollment exceeds 100% because children left and were replaced during the month. 50.4% of eligible children were enrolled in ECEAP or Head Start.</p>  |  | <p><u>TORIS 2015 Training Goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,842 of early learning professionals working on credential or degree program as part of TORIS</li> <li>• 25% training available due to Head Start/ECEAP</li> <li>• 20% of TORIS programs trained on formative assessment tools</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>State-Funded Preschooler Learning Outcomes</b><br/>No Targets<br/>November Notes: In a 2011-12 assessment of 15% of ECEAP children, the following percent moved from below age level to at or above age level in core learning areas: social emotional 37%, physical 43%, language 44%, cognitive 55%, literacy 52%, and mathematics 58%.</p> |  | <p><b>Align Prekindergarten &amp; K-3 Instructional &amp; Programmatic Practices (ELP Strategy #27)</b><br/>2012 Action Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning committee identified</li> <li>• Surveys of PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade actions</li> <li>• 4 mtgs: review research, analyze surveys, identify draft reccom'dtns</li> <li>• 2 meetings to finalize recommendations. Report written</li> <li>• Partnership approves action plan.</li> </ul>                                       |

## Examples of Possible Performance Goals

### North Carolina Performance Goal

**Goal:** 75 percent of all children with special needs in every county – and who receive subsidies or other assistance – will be enrolled in high-quality 4 or 5-star rated child care programs.

*Comment: This helped state and local partners collaborate around this goal, and now 94 percent of special needs children receiving subsidies or assistance are in high-quality care settings.*

### Other Possible Examples for Washington State

**Possible Goal:** One (1) percent of Washington’s infants under the age of 12 months will be identified as needing early intervention services and determined eligible.

*Comment: This could help partners work together to meet/exceed the Early Intervention Program’s performance target.*

**Possible Goal:** X number of infants and toddlers will receive development screening by Y date through the new Within Reach online developmental screening project.

*Comment: This could foster collaboration between state and local communities to increase the percentage of young children who receive developmental screening.*

**Possible Goal:** X percentage of vulnerable children (e.g. children receiving state child care subsidies, who are in licensed child care) will be in Early Achievers 3-5 star child care centers and family homes.

*Comment: This could help focus attention and collaboration on raising awareness of Early Achievers and ways to help low-income families secure high-quality child care for their children.*

**Appendix P:**  
**Washington Early Learning Partnership Joint Resolution**

[insert]

**Appendix Q:**  
**Comparison of Membership:**  
**State ELAC Legislation and Federal Head Start Act of 2007**

| Early Learning Advisory Council- Membership (5389 SL)   | Head Start Act of 2007   |
|---|--|
| <b>Overarching Guidance:</b> “(3) The council shall include diverse, statewide representation 18 from public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. Its membership shall 19 reflect regional, racial, and cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the state.”  | <b>Overarching Guidance:</b> “(B) The Governor may designate an existing entity in the State to serve as the State Advisory Council, and shall appoint representatives to the State Advisory Council at the Governor’s discretion. In designating an existing entity, the Governor shall take steps to ensure that its membership includes, to the extent possible, representatives consistent with subparagraph (C).” |
| <b>Membership Guidance:</b> Not more than 23 members  | <b>Membership Guidance:</b> “(C) Members of the State Advisory Council shall include, to the maximum extent possible—” (a representative of the following)   |
| <b>Chairs:</b> Co-chaired by one representative of a state agency and one nongovernmental member, to be elected by the council for two-year terms.  | <b>Chairs:</b> NA  |
| <b>Terms:</b> (4) Councilmembers shall serve two-year terms. However, to stagger the terms of the council, the initial appointments for twelve of the 23 members shall be for one year. Once the initial one-year to two-year terms expire, all subsequent terms shall be for two years, with the terms expiring on June 30th of the applicable year. The terms shall be staggered in such a way that, where possible, the terms of members representing a specific group do not expire simultaneously. | <b>Terms:</b> NA   |
| Membership  | Membership   |
| DEL (Gov. Appt.)  | Agency responsible for child care  |
| OSPI (Gov. Appt.)   | State educational agency   |
| Higher Education Coordinating Board & State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (Gov. Appt.)  | Institutions of higher education in the State  |
| 7 leaders in early childhood education in one or more areas such as: the K-12 System, <u>family day care and child care centers</u> with four or more of the 7 <b>governor’s appointments</b> made as follows:  | Local providers of early childhood education and development services  |
| 1. A representative of a head start, early head start, migrant/seasonal head start, or tribal head start program;   | Head Start agencies located in the State, including migrant and seasonal Head Start programs and Indian Head Start programs  |
| 2. The head start state collaboration office director or the  | State Director of Head Start Collaboration   |

| Early Learning Advisory Council- Membership (5389 SL)   | Head Start Act of 2007  |
|---|---|
| director's designee;  |   |
| 3. A representative of the state agency responsible for programs under section 619 or part C of the federal individuals with disabilities education act   | State agency responsible for programs under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.);  |
| 4. A representative of a local education agency   | Local educational agencies  |
| DSHS & DOH (Gov. Appt.)   | State agency responsible for health or mental health care   |
| OFM (Gov. Appt.)  | Other entities determined to be relevant by the Governor  |
| <u>Representative designated by Sovereign Tribal Governments</u>  |   |
| 2 members of the house of representatives one from each caucus (House of Representatives Appt.)   |   |
| 2 members of the Senate one from each caucus (Senate Appt.)   |   |
| 2 parents, one of whom serves on the Departments Parent Advisory Group (Gov. Appt.)   |   |
| 1 representative of the public private partnership (Thrive By Five) (Thrive Board Appt.)  |   |
| 1 representative from the WA federation of independent schools (WFIS Appt?)   |   |
| Washington ELAC Legislation: Council Roles  | Federal Head Start Act: Council Roles   |
| <b>Analysis:</b> Washington State Early Learning Advisory Council legislation contains general language concerning ELAC roles. Each of the roles contained in the Head Start Act could fall within Washington's more general guidance.  | <b>Analysis:</b> The Head Start Act of 2007 contains specific functions each of which could be accomplished within Washington State's more general guidance.  |
| <u>Roles Language from Legislation:</u><br><br><b>Sec. 2.</b> RCW 43.215.090 and 2010 c 234 s 3 and 2010 c 12 s 1 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:<br>(1) The early learning advisory council is established to advise the department on statewide early learning issues that would build a comprehensive system of quality early learning programs and services for Washington's children and families by assessing needs and the availability of services, aligning resources, developing plans for data collection and professional development of early childhood educators, and establishing key performance measures.<br>(2) The council shall work in conjunction with the department to develop a statewide early learning plan that guides the department in promoting alignment of private and public sector actions, objectives, and resources, and ensuring school readiness. | <u>Roles Language from Legislation:</u><br><br>The State Advisory Council shall, in addition to any responsibilities assigned to the Council by the Governor of the State-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality pre-kindergarten services for low-income children in the State;</li> <li>• identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among Federally-funded and State-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among State agencies responsible for administering such programs;</li> <li>• develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and</li> </ul> |

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|  | <p>local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;</li> <li>• develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;</li> <li>• assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or prekindergarten program; and make recommendations for improvements in State early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>(ii) The State Advisory Council shall hold public hearings and provide an opportunity for public comment on the activities described in clause</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State Advisory Council shall submit a statewide strategic report addressing the activities described in clause (i) to the State Director of Head Start Collaboration and the Governor of the State.</li> </ul> |